

1
VOLUME

SHONENJUMP MANGA

Tegami Bachi

LETTER • BEE

STORY AND ART BY
HIROYUKI ASADA

There is a land of perpetual night...



...a land called Amberground.



...a rare
breed of
government
agent travels
this dark,
dangerous
territory
on official
business.

Where the
light of the
man-made
sun that
shines over
the capital
cannot
reach...



...with
their
HEARTS.

People
entrust
these
agents
...

And they have sworn to deliver...



...to
deliver
...

...
letters.



*In
all
things...*

*the
heart
must
take
prece-
dence.*

*The
heart
rules
over
all
things...*

*...
and
all
things
come
from
the
heart.*



Tegami Bachi

LETTER · BEE

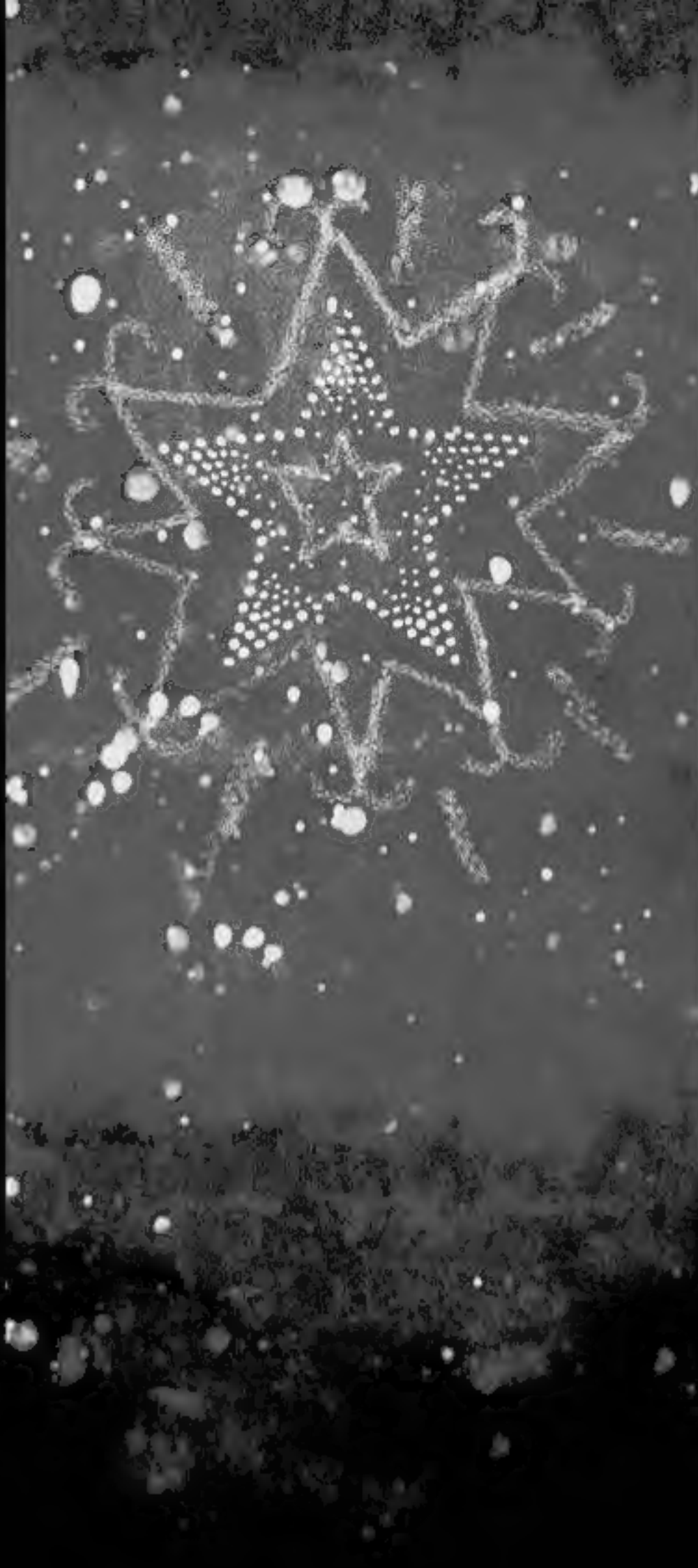
VOLUME 1

Letter and Letter Bee



STORY AND ART BY

HIROYUKI ASADA



In the postscript of a previously published collection of my artwork, I wrote that “the pages of my favorite books are tattered.” I keep the books I love within arm’s reach, and I read them over and over. The tattered pages show how much I love them.

I hope you wear out the pages of *Tegami Bachi*.

Another adventure is about to begin. Let’s go!

—Hiroyuki Asada, 2006

Hiroyuki Asada made his debut in *Monthly Shonen Jump* in 1986. He’s best known for his basketball manga *I’ll*. He’s a contributor to artist Range Murata’s quarterly manga anthology *Robot*. *Tegami Bachi: Letter Bee* is his most recent series.



Tegami Bachi

LETTER • BEE

VOLUME 1

Letter and Letter Bee

CHAPTER 1:

Letter and Letter Bee 9

CHAPTER 2:

Crybaby Boy, Letter Girl 127



CHAPTER 1: Letter and Letter Bee





GOTTA
BE.

NO DOUBT
ABOUT IT.
THIS IS THE
PLACE...

STILL...

...I'VE NEVER
HEARD OF
A POST
MARKER SO
FAR FROM
TOWN.



RODA?

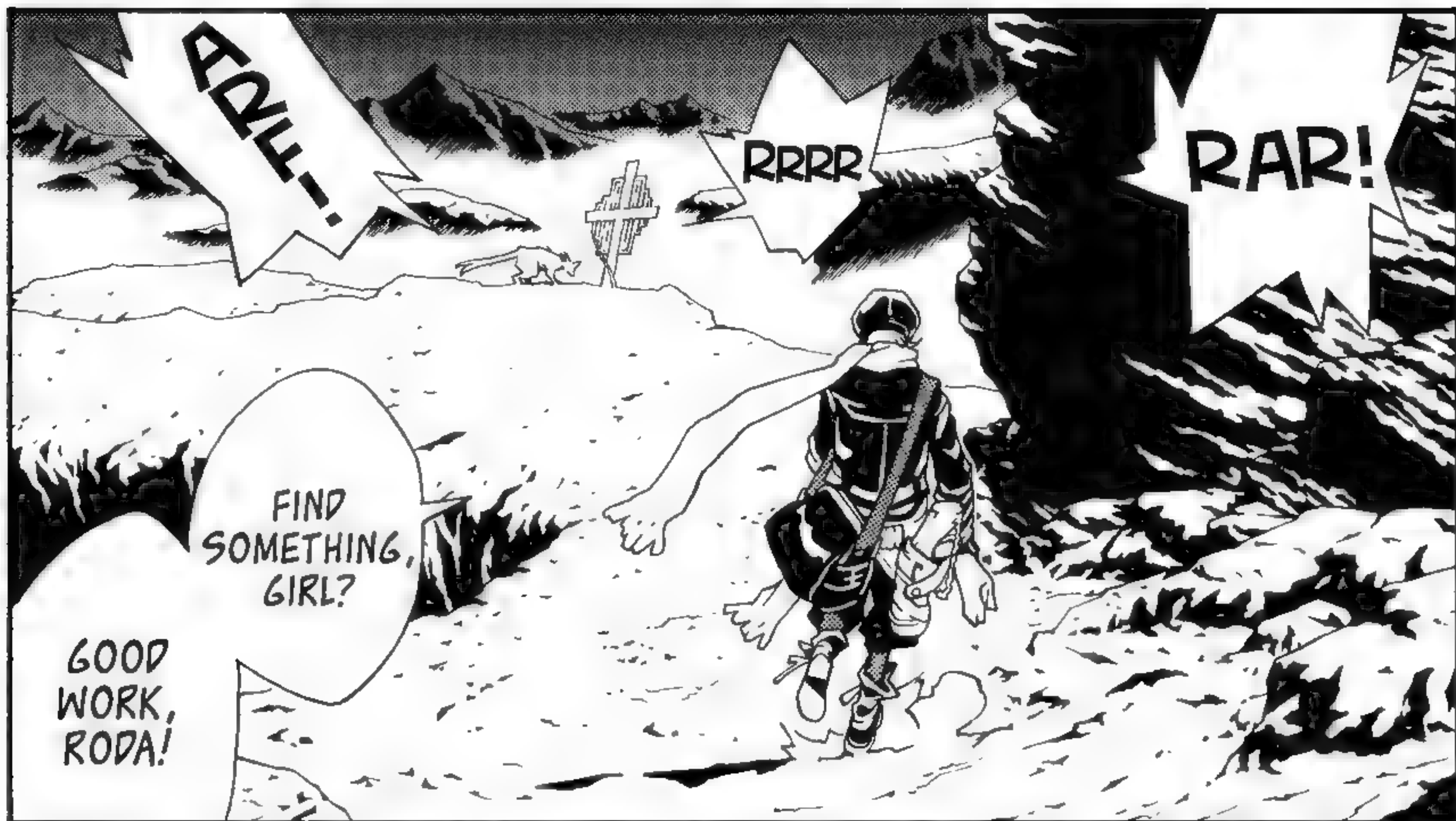
RARE!



MUST'VE
BEEN A
WICKED
FIRE.

AND
ALL THIS
CHARRED
WRECKAGE...

WHAT
DO YOU
THINK,
RODA?





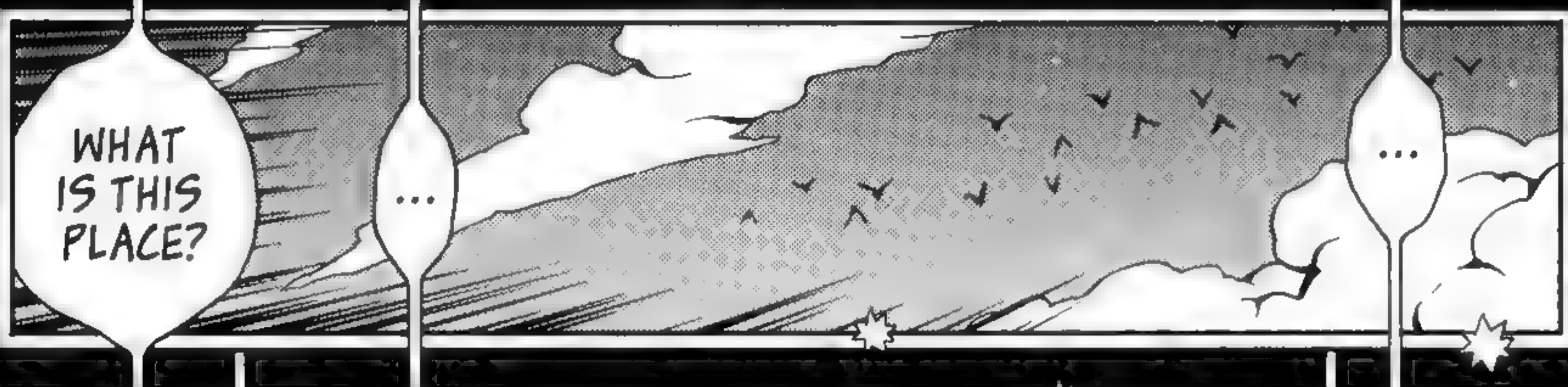
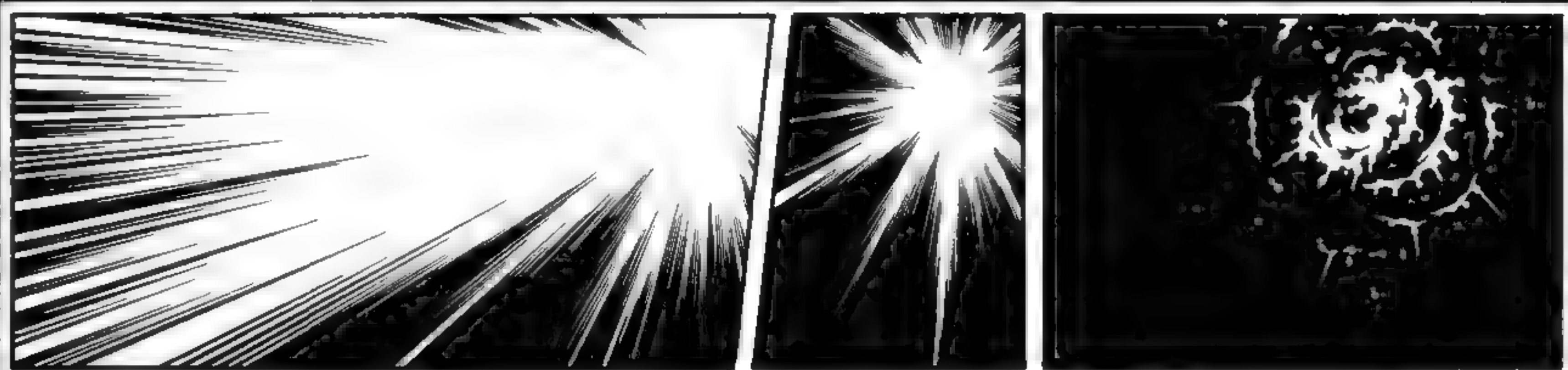
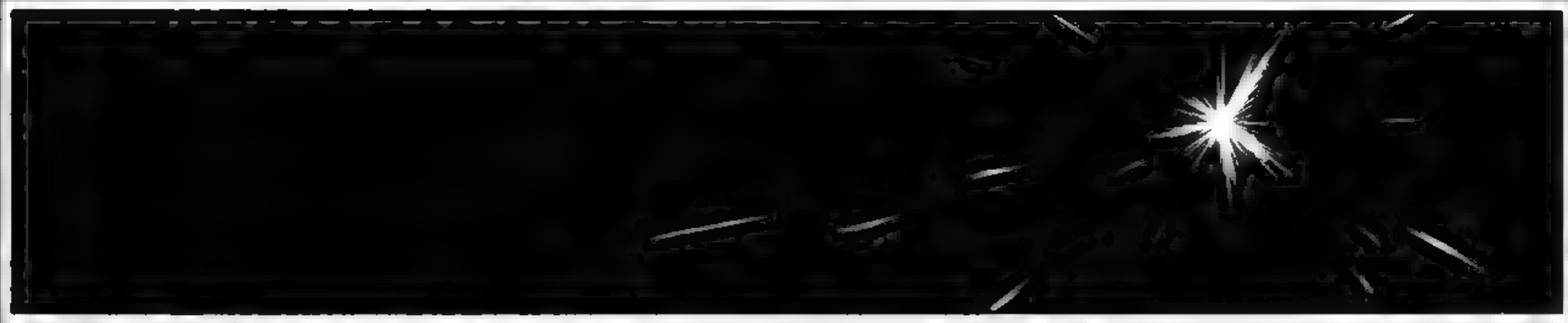
...IS
THE
LETTER.

SKR
CH



THIS
CHILD...

SHIMMER





MAMA
...

DON'T
CRY.

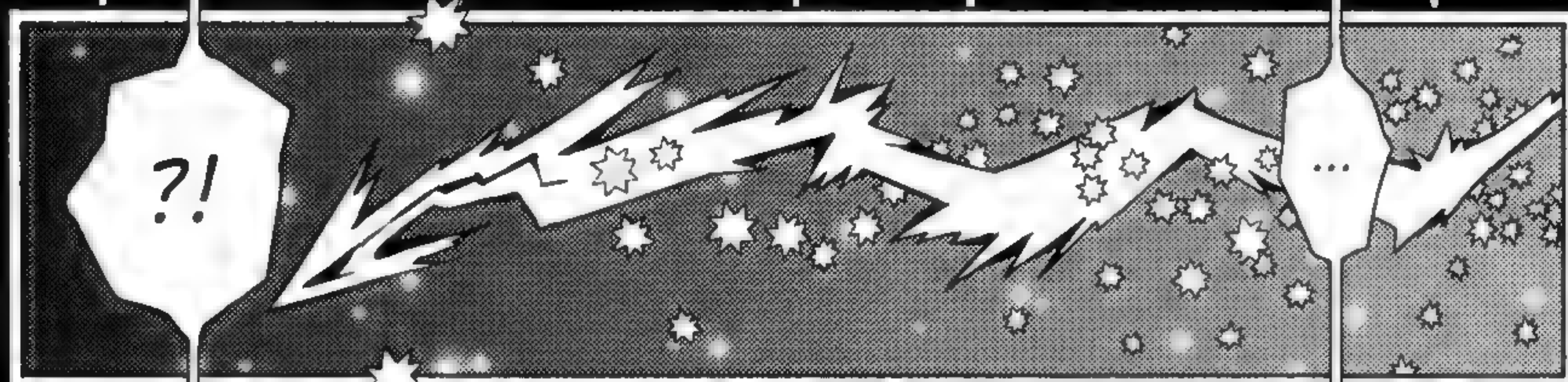


YOU'RE
CRYING?



I
CAN'T
HEAR
YOU...

WHAT?



?!

...



WHO
ARE...

WHO...



THAT'S
NOT
MAMA.









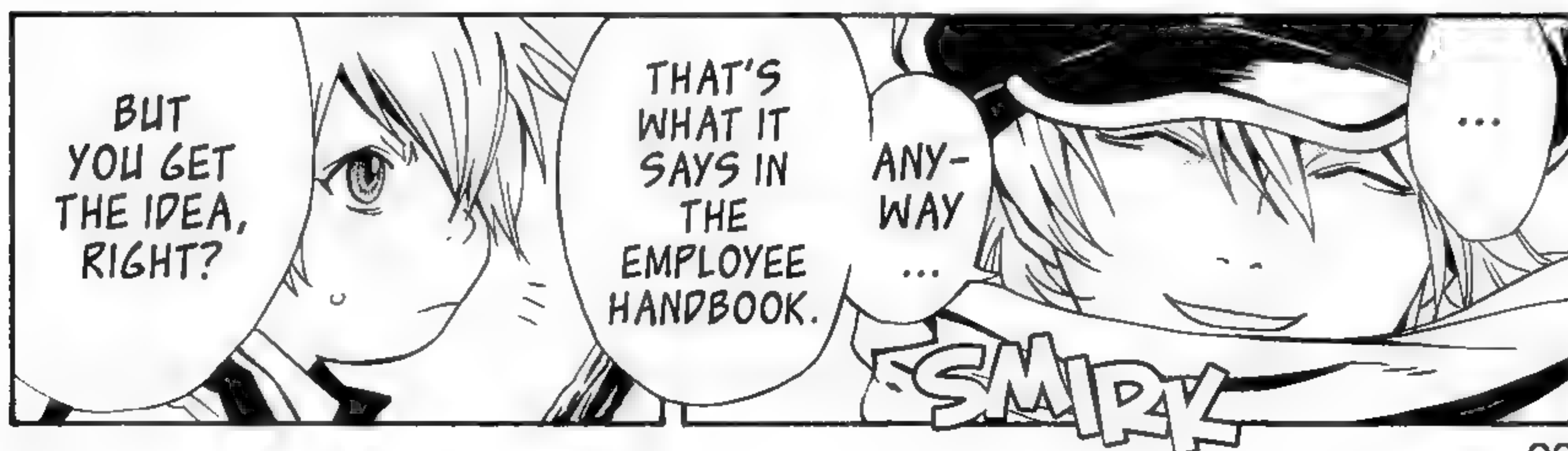


...IS THE
JOB OF A
LETTER
BEE!

...
DELIVERING
THE
PRECIOUS
LETTERS OF
THE PEOPLE!

THAT
...

skrit skrit



BUT
YOU GET
THE IDEA,
RIGHT?

THAT'S
WHAT IT
SAYS IN
THE
EMPLOYEE
HANDBOOK.

ANY-
WAY
...

SMIRK



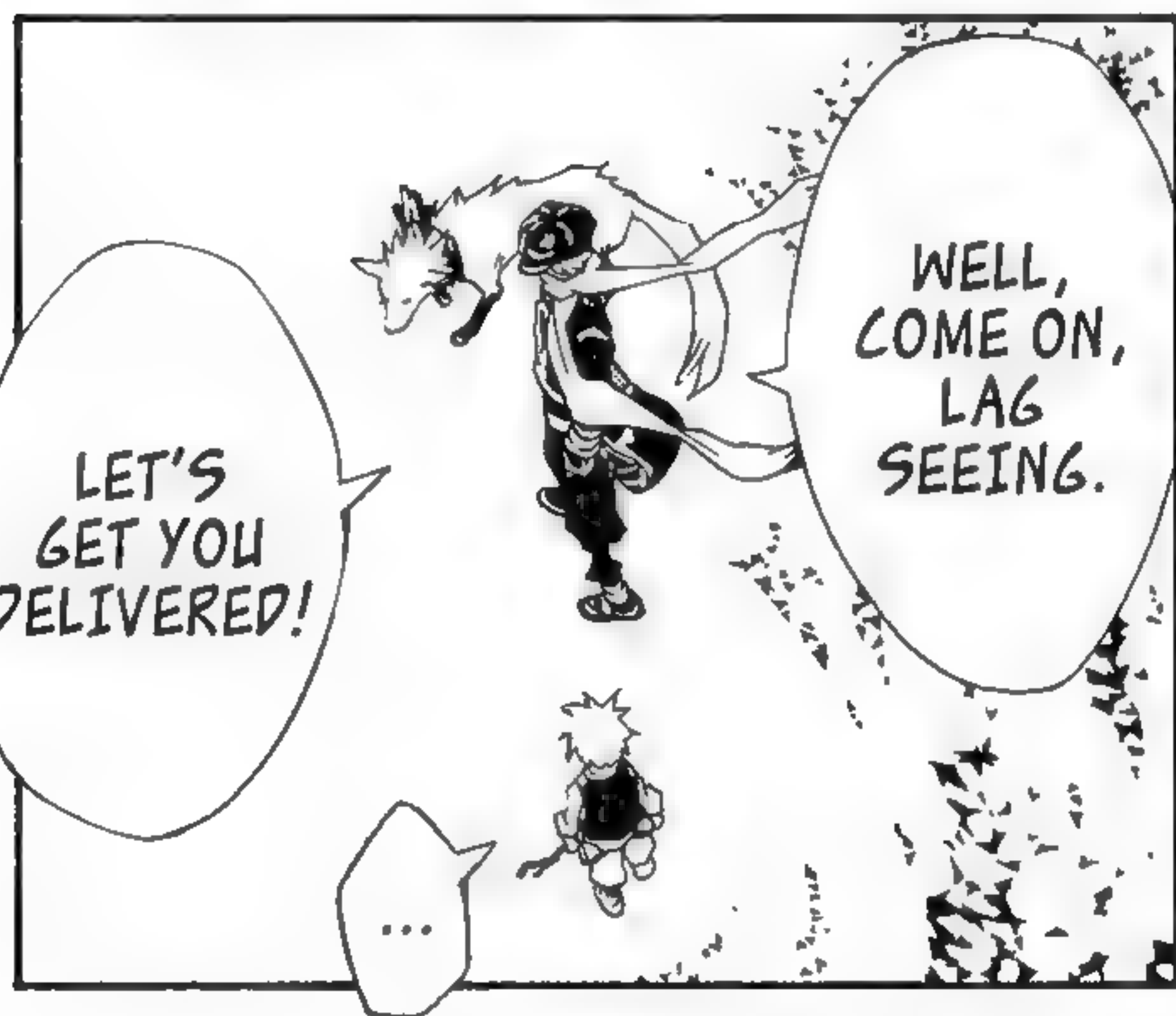
THE
CONTENTS
ARE OF NO
CONCERN
TO ME.

MY JOB
IS MERELY
TO SAFELY
DELIVER
THE
PACKAGE.

FOR
DELIVERY
VIA
LETTER
BEE.

AND
THAT
MAKES
YOU A
LETTER...

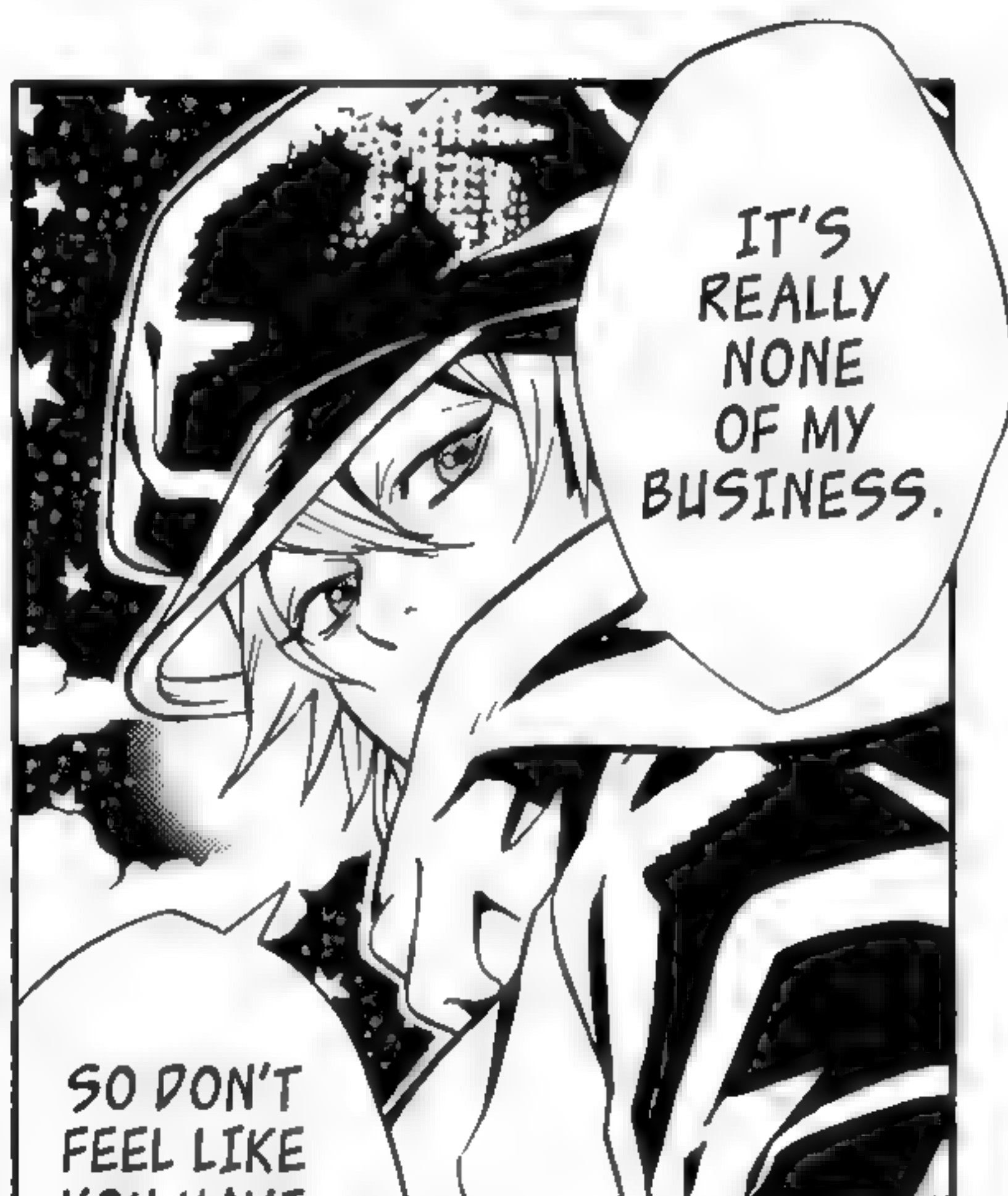
YOUR
PAPERWORK'S
ALL IN ORDER.
POSTAGE,
TOO.



LET'S
GET YOU
DELIVERED!

WELL,
COME ON,
LAG
SEEING.

...



IT'S
REALLY
NONE
OF MY
BUSINESS.

SO DON'T
FEEL LIKE
YOU HAVE
TO GO
SPILLING
YOUR HEART
OUT TO ME.

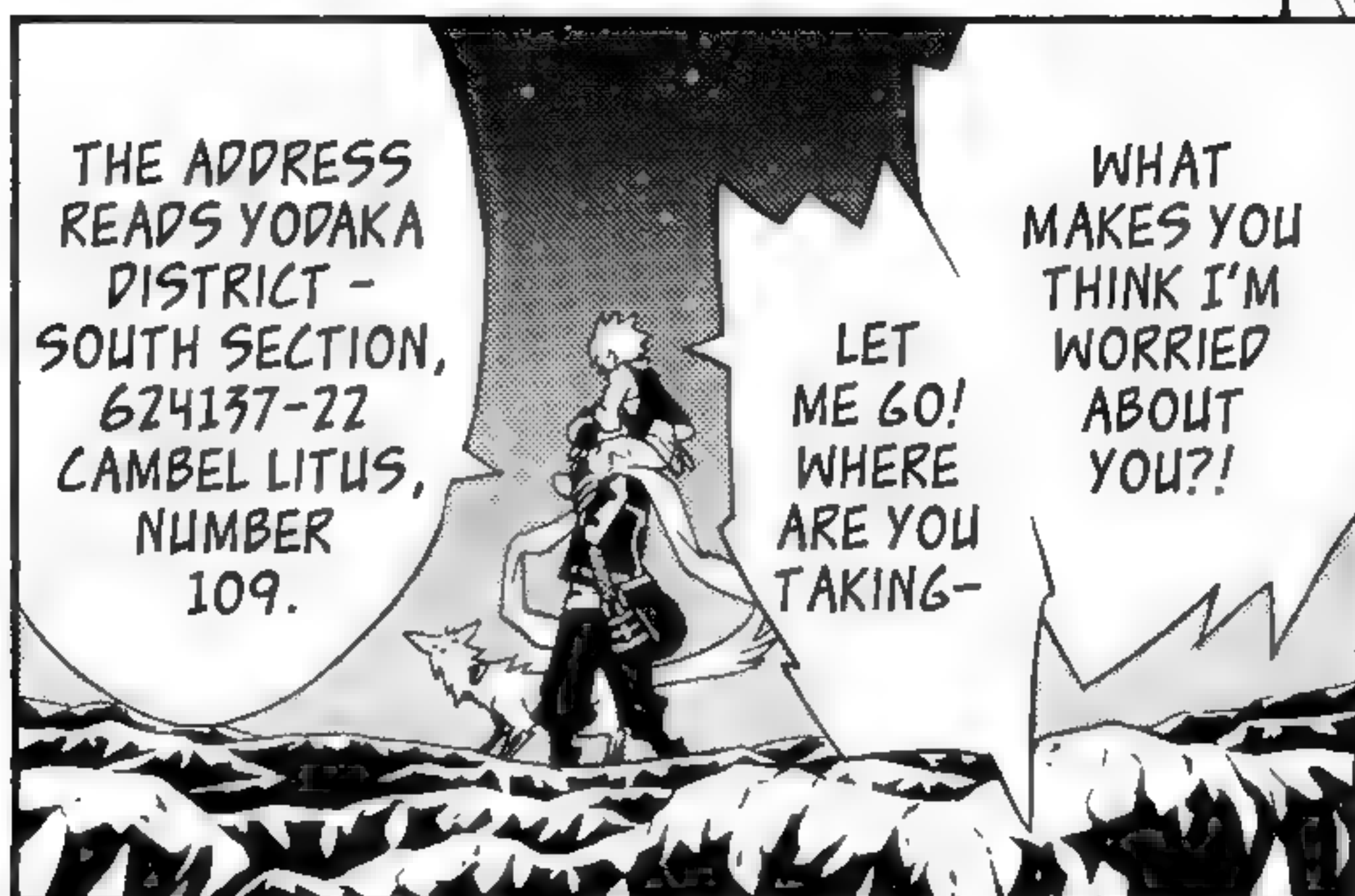


AS
IF-



FEEL

!!



THE ADDRESS
READS YODAKA
DISTRICT -
SOUTH SECTION,
624137-22
CAMEL LITUS,
NUMBER
109.

LET
ME GO!
WHERE
ARE YOU
TAKING-

WHAT
MAKES YOU
THINK I'M
WORRIED
ABOUT
YOU?!

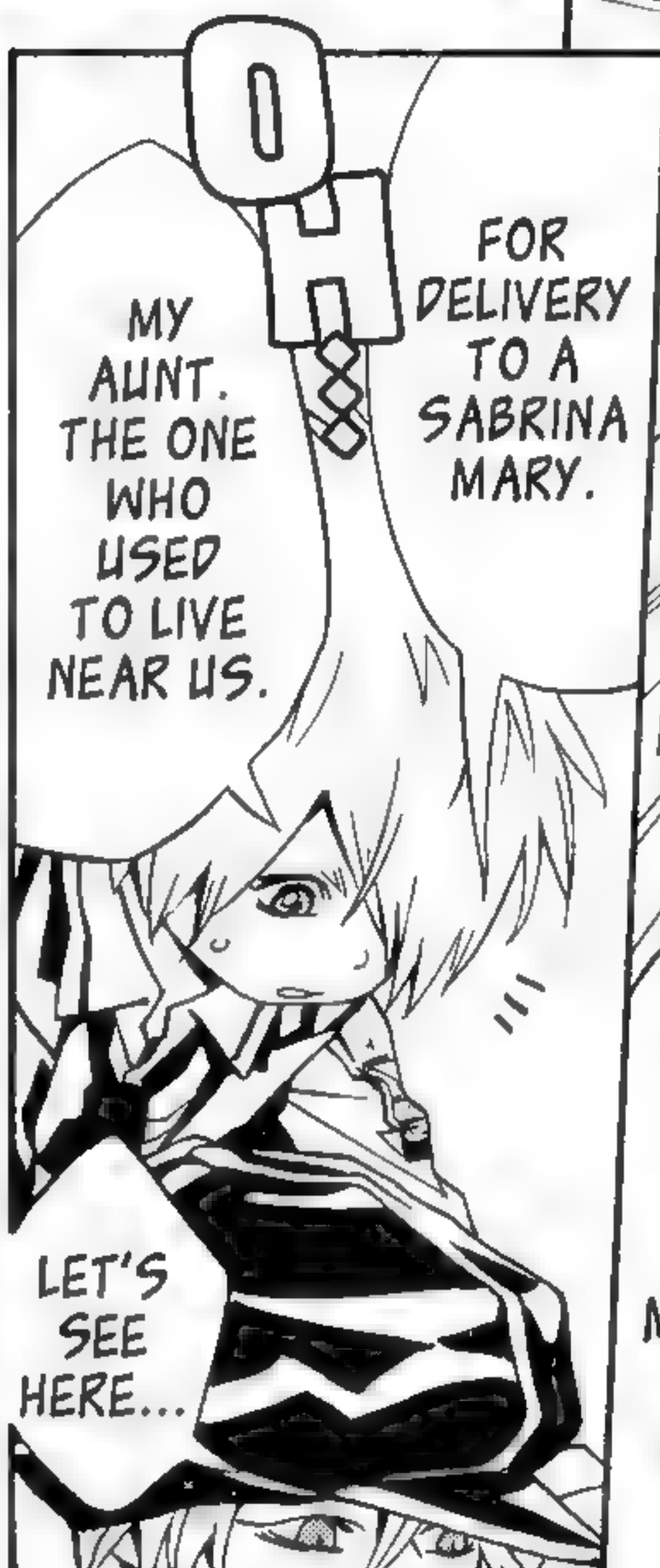
WAA! WUMP



SOMEONE
NAMED
ANN
SEEING.

THE
SENDER
OF THIS
LETTER
IS...

MAMA
?!



OH
MY
AUNT.
THE ONE
WHO
USED
TO LIVE
NEAR US.

FOR
DELIVERY
TO A
SABRINA
MARY.

LET'S
SEE
HERE...

PUT
ME
DOWN!

DON'T
YOU
WORRY
ABOUT
MY BACK!
THIS IS
MY JOB!

IT'S
IMPOSSIBLE!
YOU MADE
SOME
STUPID-

YOU'RE
LYING!

FOR
CRYIN'
OUT
LOUD,
LAG!

SQUIRM
SQUIRM
MAMA
WOULDN'T
MAIL ME! IT
MUST BE
THOSE MEN!

OUCH!
HEY!

FWAP

Thump

Harp?





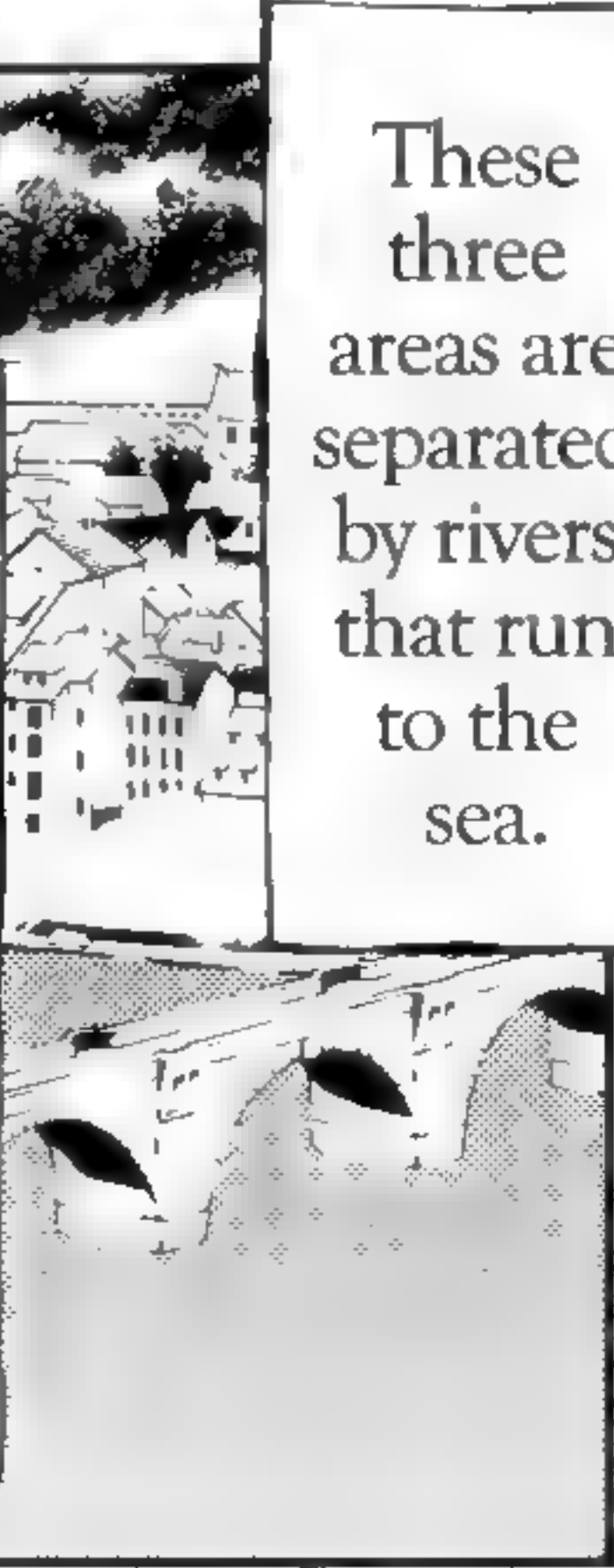


The capital, Akatsuki, brightly lit by the man-made star that shines overhead, is home to the highest caste, the city of the chosen ones.

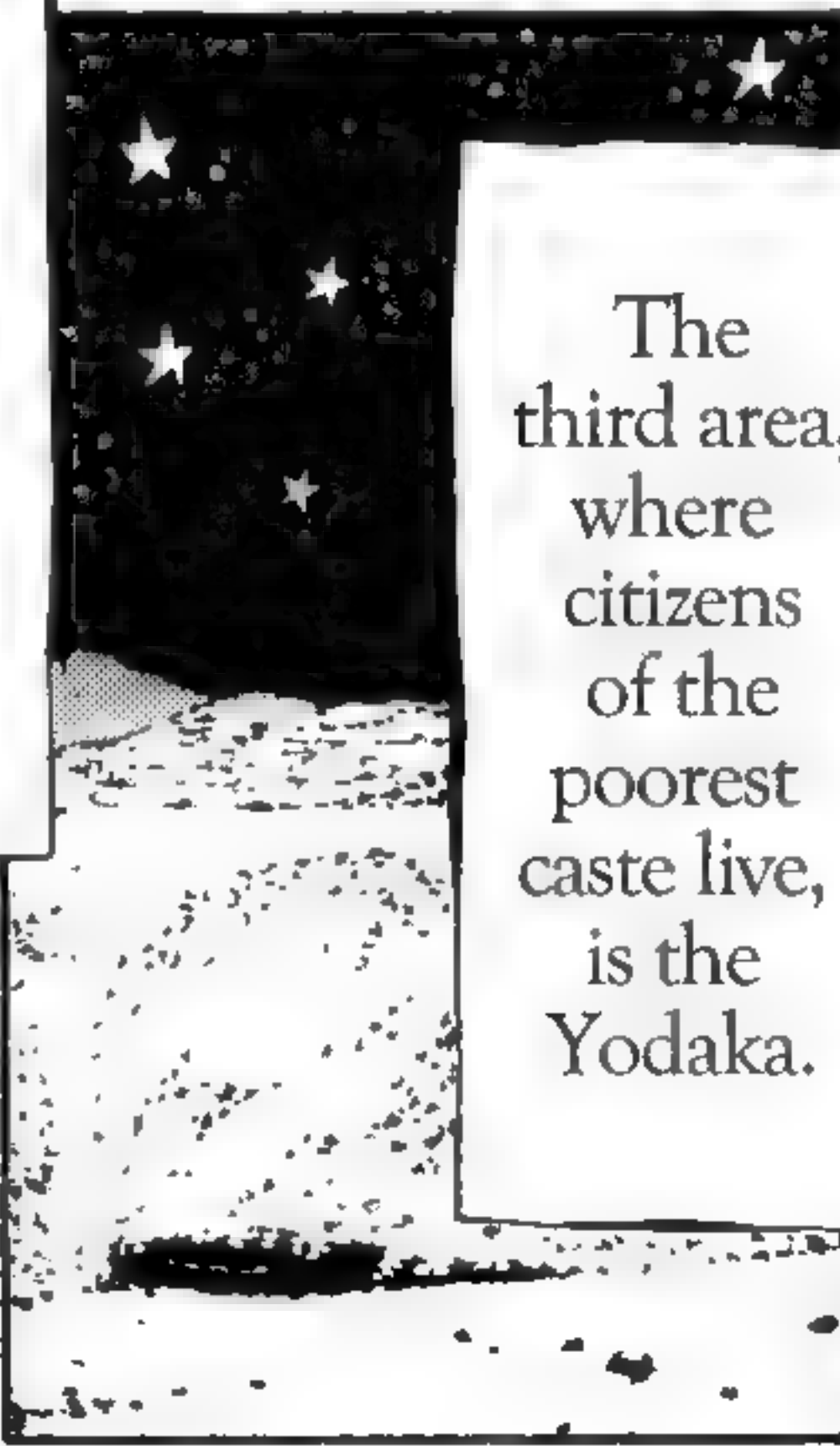


Amber-ground, surrounded on all sides by water, is divided into three areas by a caste system.

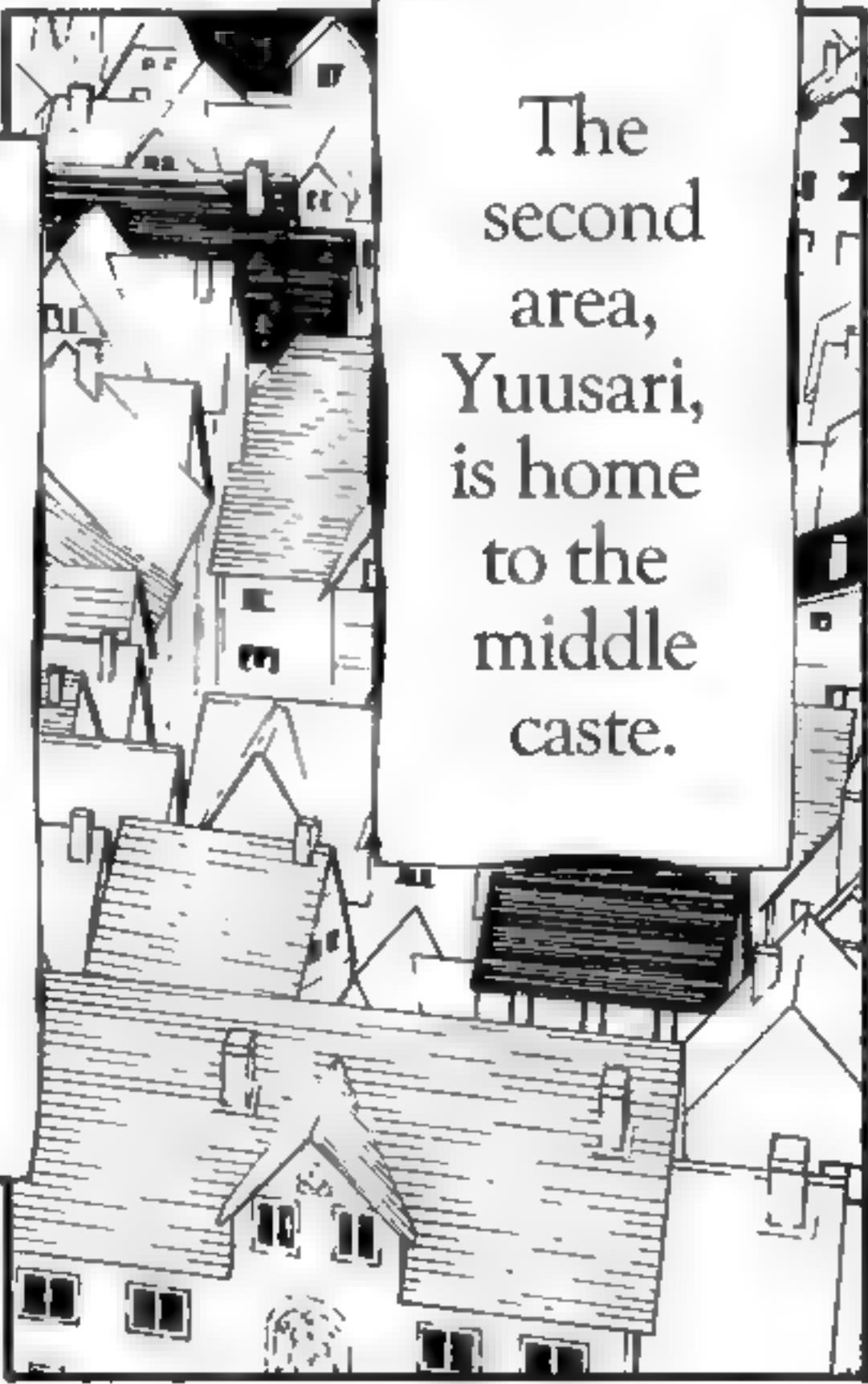
Only those with government-issued permits may cross the bridges.



These three areas are separated by rivers that run to the sea.



The third area, where citizens of the poorest caste live, is the Yodaka.



The second area, Yuusari, is home to the middle caste.



ALL
RIGHT
ALREADY!

PUT ME
DOWN!

DO YOU
PROMISE
TO WALK
NICELY?

The
farther one
goes from
Akatsuki,
the darker
the world
becomes...

The small
artificial
star exists
solely to
illuminate
the capital
city.



HAVE
YOU EVER
BEEN OVER
THE
MOUNTAINS?

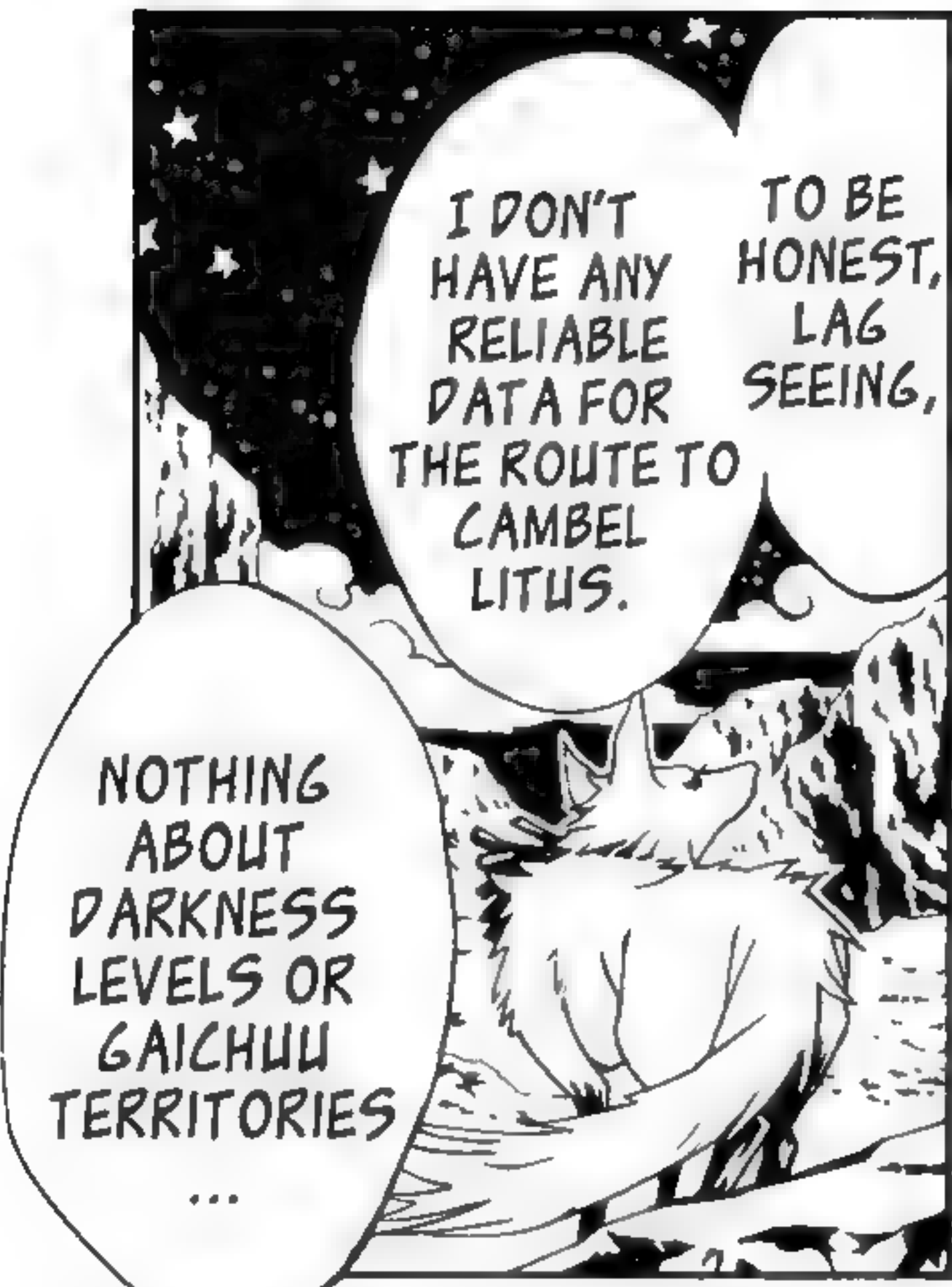
IT TAKES
ABOUT TEN
DAYS TO REACH
CAMBEL LITUS.
THE ONLY DODGY
PART WILL BE
CROSSING THIS
BLUE PUMPKIN
MOUNTAIN
RANGE.

AND
CAMBEL
LITUS IS
AT THE
SOUTHERN-
MOST TIP
OF YODAKA.

LET'S
SEE...
I PICKED
YOU UP
HERE IN
COZA
BEL...

'COURSE
NOT.

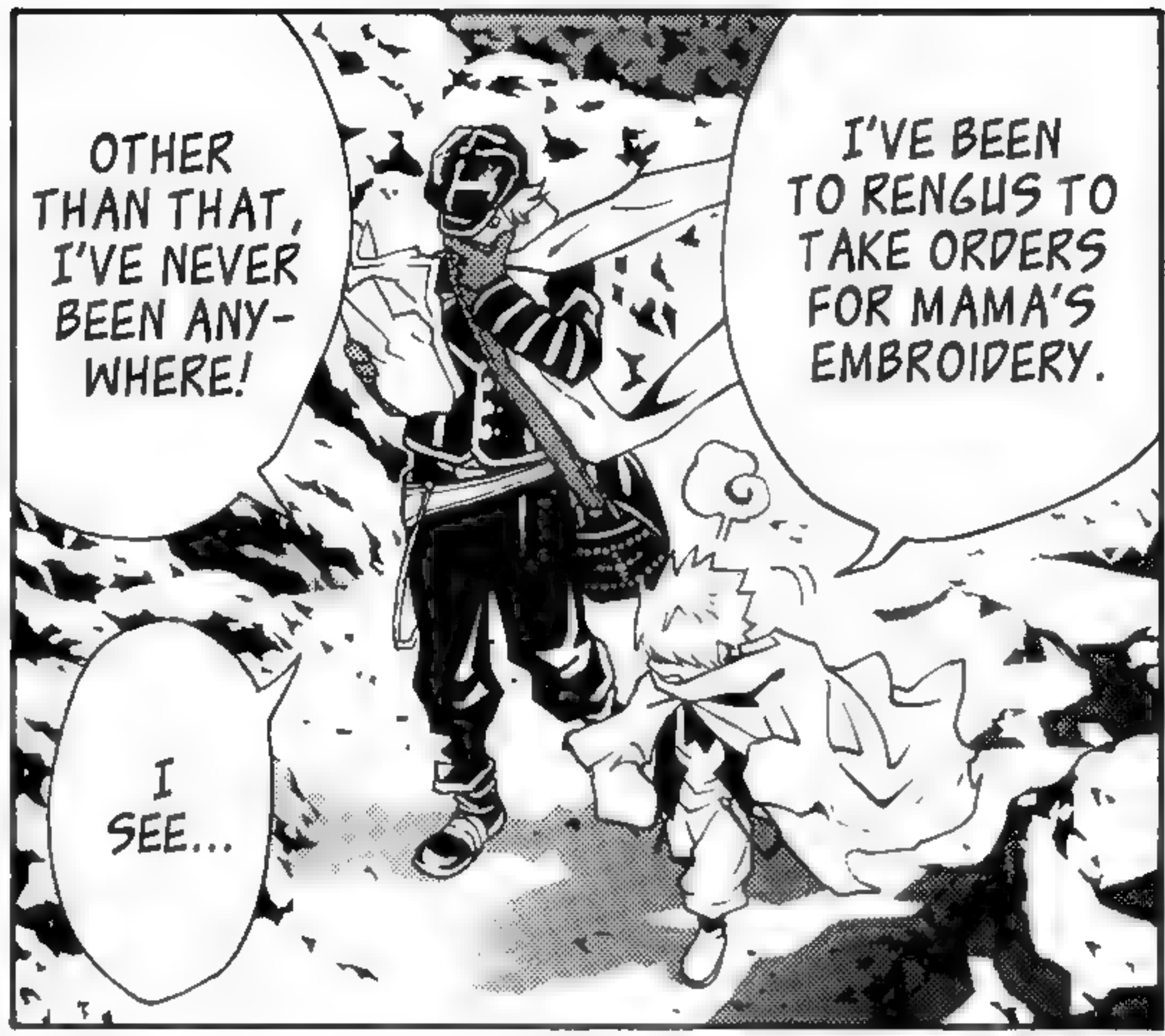
Destination
Cambel Litus



NOTHING ABOUT DARKNESS LEVELS OR GAICHUU TERRITORIES ...

I DON'T HAVE ANY RELIABLE DATA FOR THE ROUTE TO CAMBEL LITUS.

TO BE HONEST, LAG SEEING,



OTHER THAN THAT, I'VE NEVER BEEN ANYWHERE!

I SEE...

I'VE BEEN TO RENGUS TO TAKE ORDERS FOR MAMA'S EMBROIDERY.

[GLOSSARY: 鎧虫 = GAICHUU = ARMOR + INSECT/BUG]



THAT'S RIGHT, HEART...

AND THEY'RE COVERED IN ARMOR THAT'S STRONGER AND HARDER THAN SWORDS. THEY CAN EVEN DEFLECT BULLETS. THEY LOOK LIKE...



GAICHUU TYPICALLY ATTACK WHEN THEY SENSE A PERSON'S HEART.

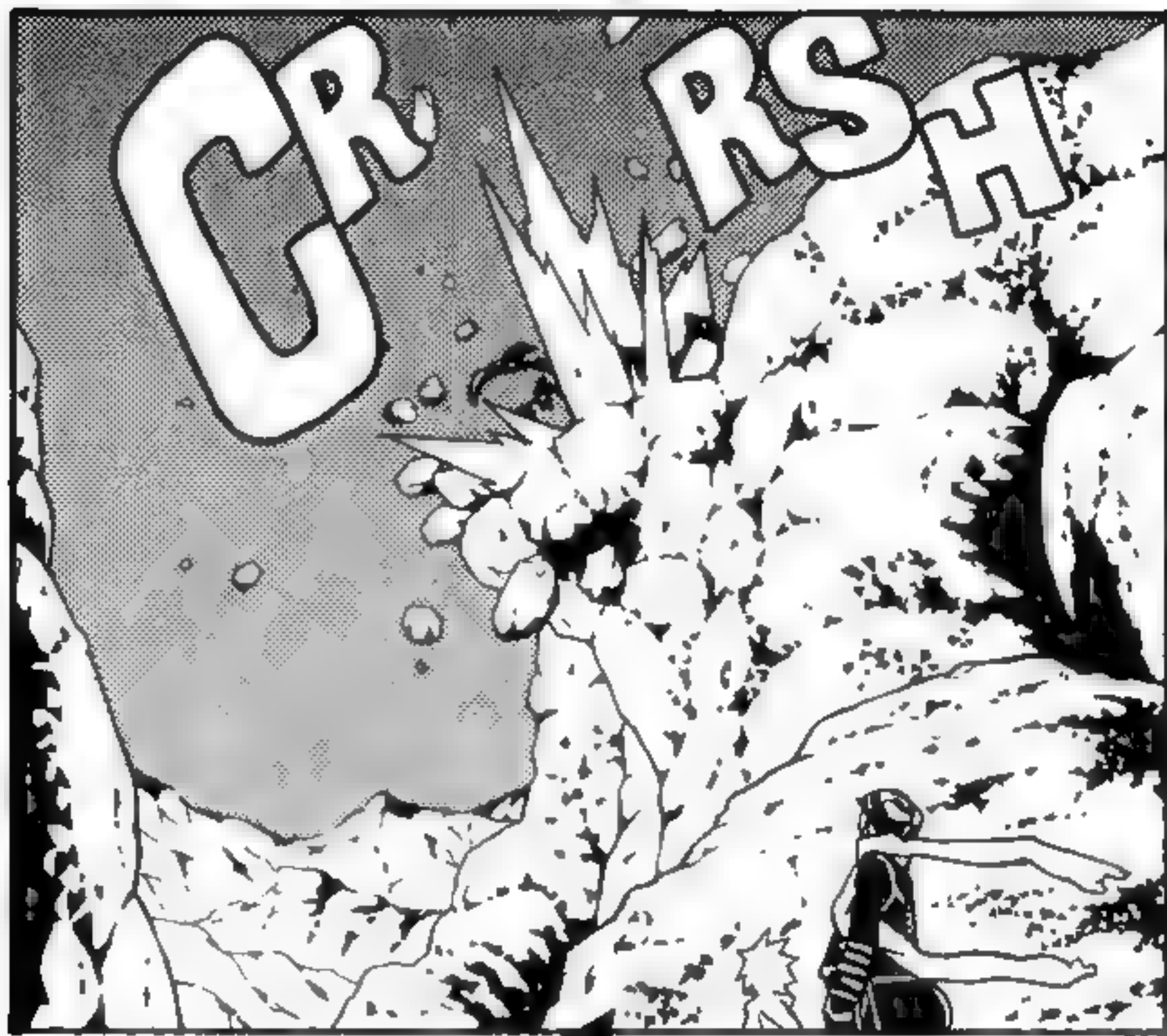
HEART?



GAI...
...CHUU?



THEY'RE DANGEROUS CREATURES, VERY FEROCIOUS.
THEY LIVE IN THE DARKNESS BETWEEN TOWNS.



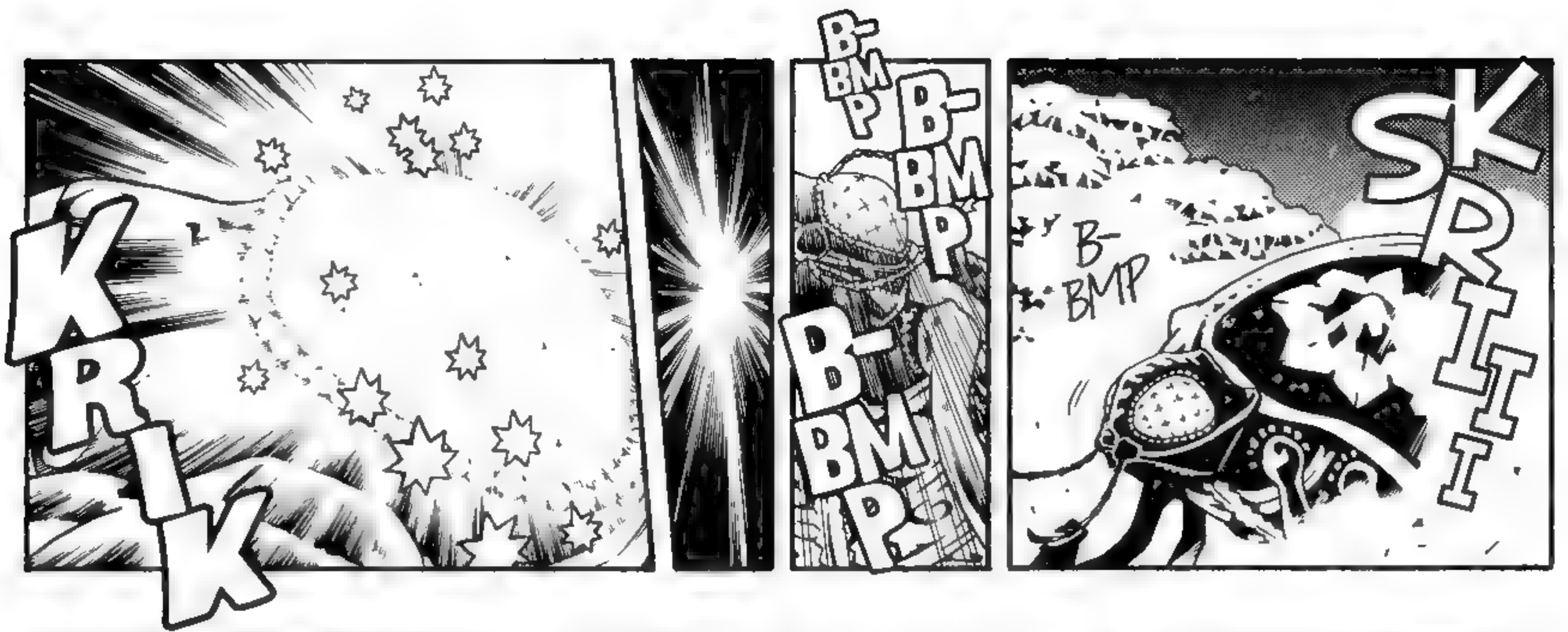


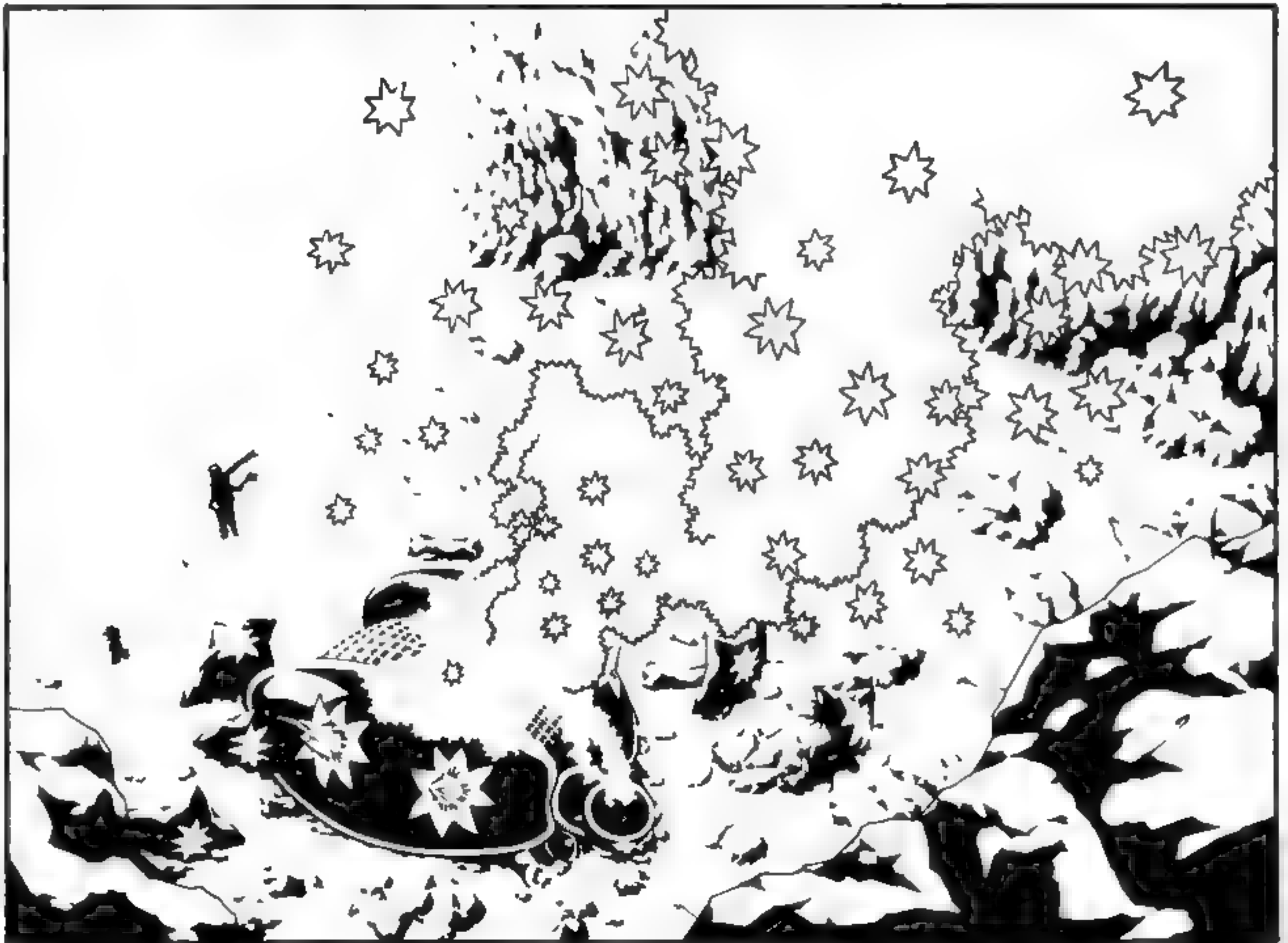
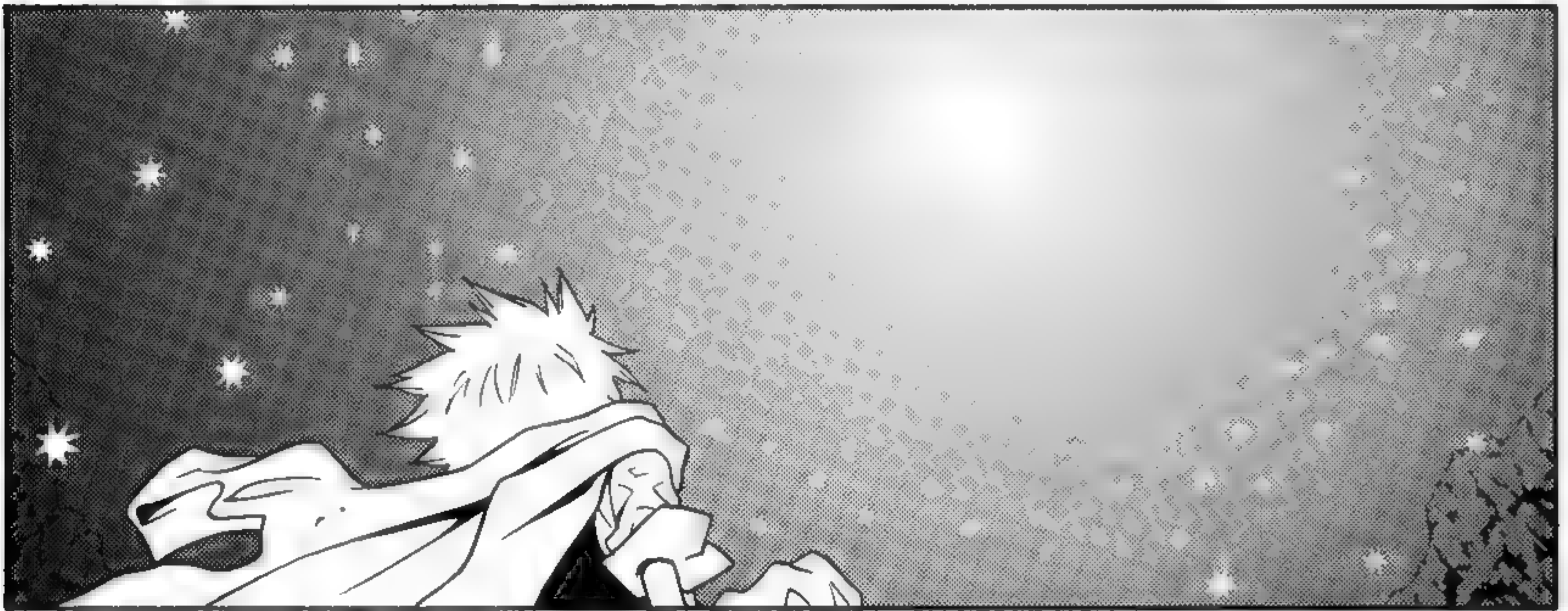
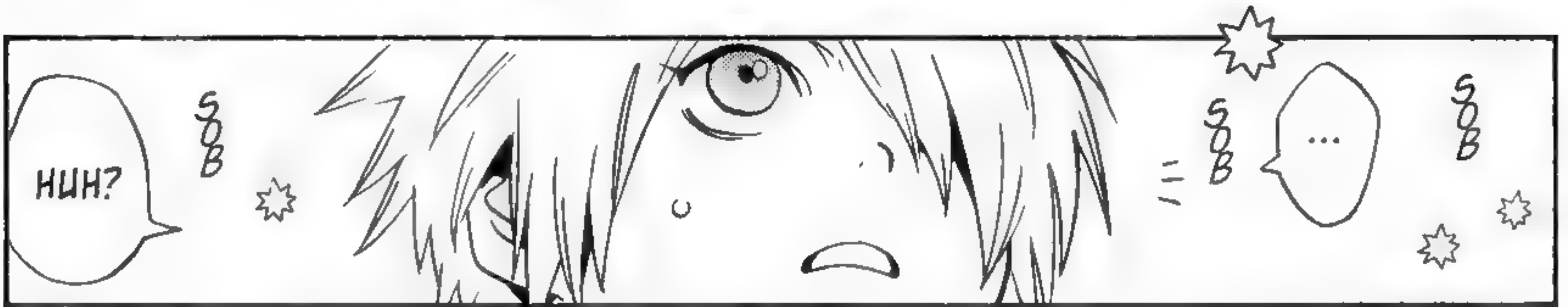






KUROBARI!!
BLACK NEEDLE!!







THE GAICHUU... IT WAS... CRYING.

I CAN'T EXPLAIN ...

R R R R

Sniff Sniff

Lick

I'M TELLING YOU, I COULD HEAR IT!



... YOUR SPOON ISN'T MOVING!

COME ON, LAG SEEING! EAT UP!

CHOMP...

GRUMBLE

MMFF!

NOW EAT YOUR SOUP!!

I DOUBT IT. SCHOLARS IN YUUSARI HAVE PROVEN THAT GAICHUU POSSESS NO HEART.

AND NO MORE COMPLAINING!

GARRR

SHUT UP AND EAT!

HOARK

PITOO

GAG!

BLECH! IT'S AWFUL!





IT
WAS
GLOWING.

I
SAW
IT.

THAT'S
THE
OTHER
KEY
ELEMENT.

PLICK

EMBEDDED
IN MY
SHINDAN-
JU?

DID
YOU
NOTICE
THIS
BLACK
STONE...

INSECTS
?!

...SPIRITUAL
ENERGY WAS
CARRIED IN
THE BODIES
OF TINY
INSECTS.

DURING
ANCIENT
TIMES...

...THAT
ENERGY
WAS
PRESERVED
IN SPIRIT
AMBER.

THIS
STONE IS
MADE OF
SPIRIT
AMBER.

WHEN
THESE
SPIRIT
INSECTS
GOT
TRAPPED
IN TREE
RESIN...





RIGHT, RODA ?!

I HATE TO THINK HOW MEAN YOU'D GET IF THAT HAPPENED!

...



YOUR HEART.



IF YOU ATE IT ALL UP LIKE AN APPLE.



IF I FIRE ALL OF MY HEART OUT IN A SHINDAN...

HOWEVER ...

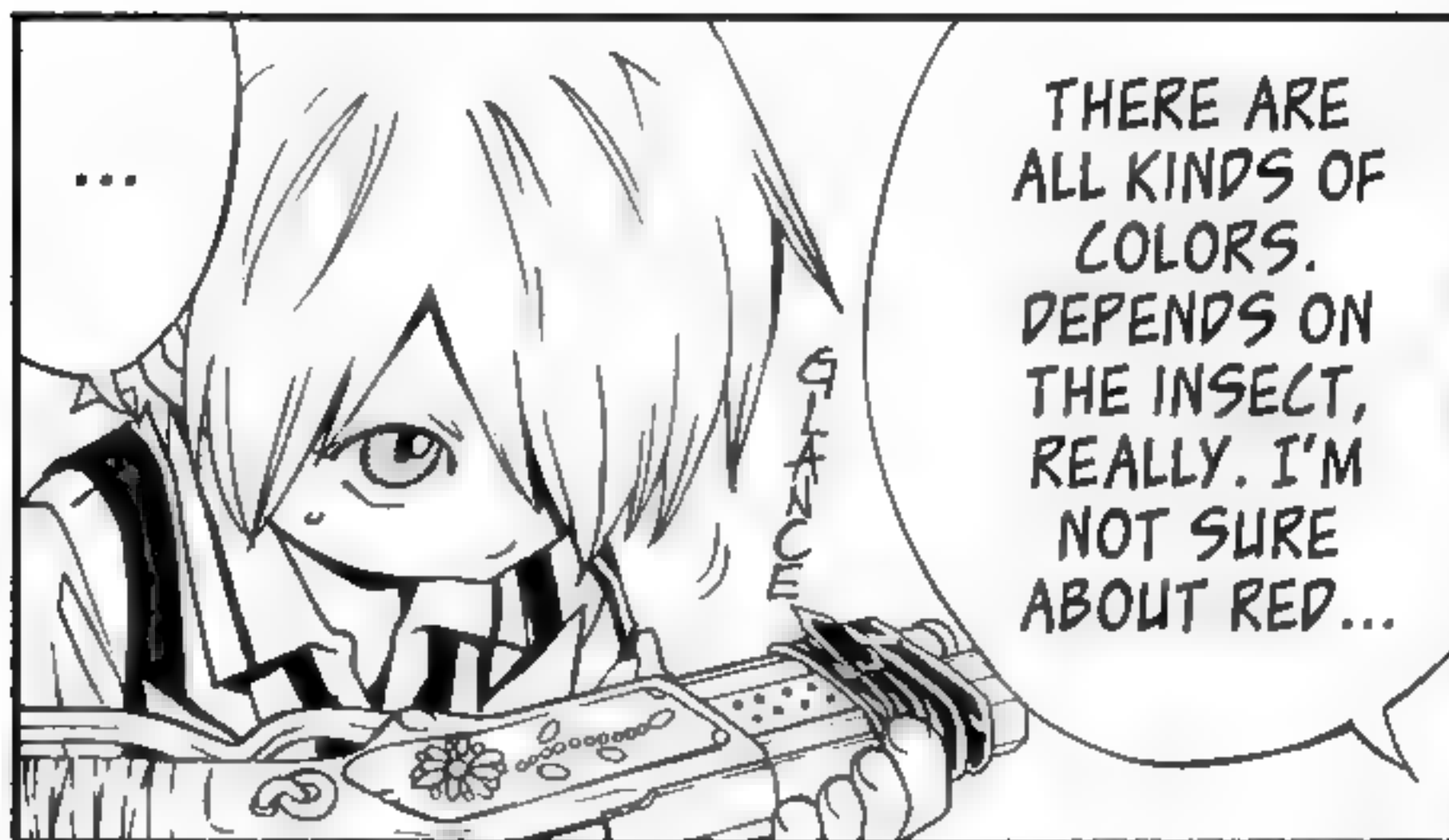
UNLIKE AN APPLE, THE HEART CAN RECOVER WHAT'S BEEN LOST...

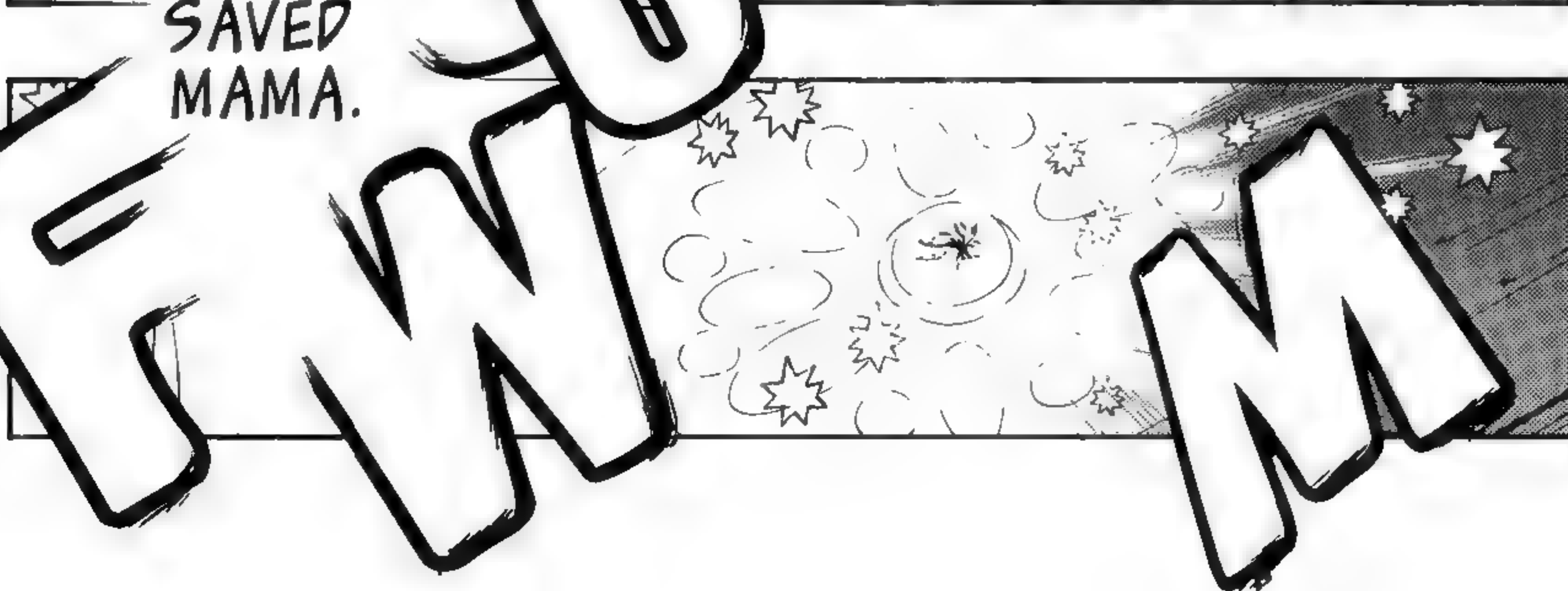
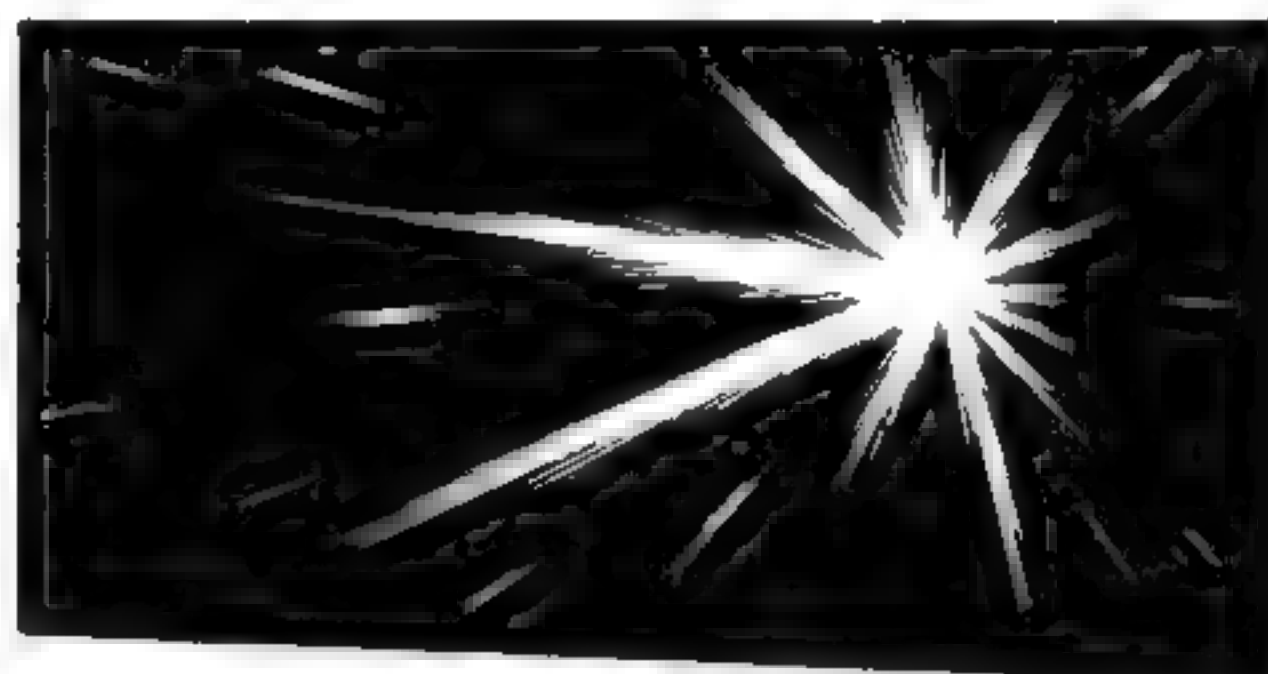


...WOULD PROBABLY DISAPPEAR FOREVER.

BUT THE PERSON KNOWN AS GAUCHE SUEDE...

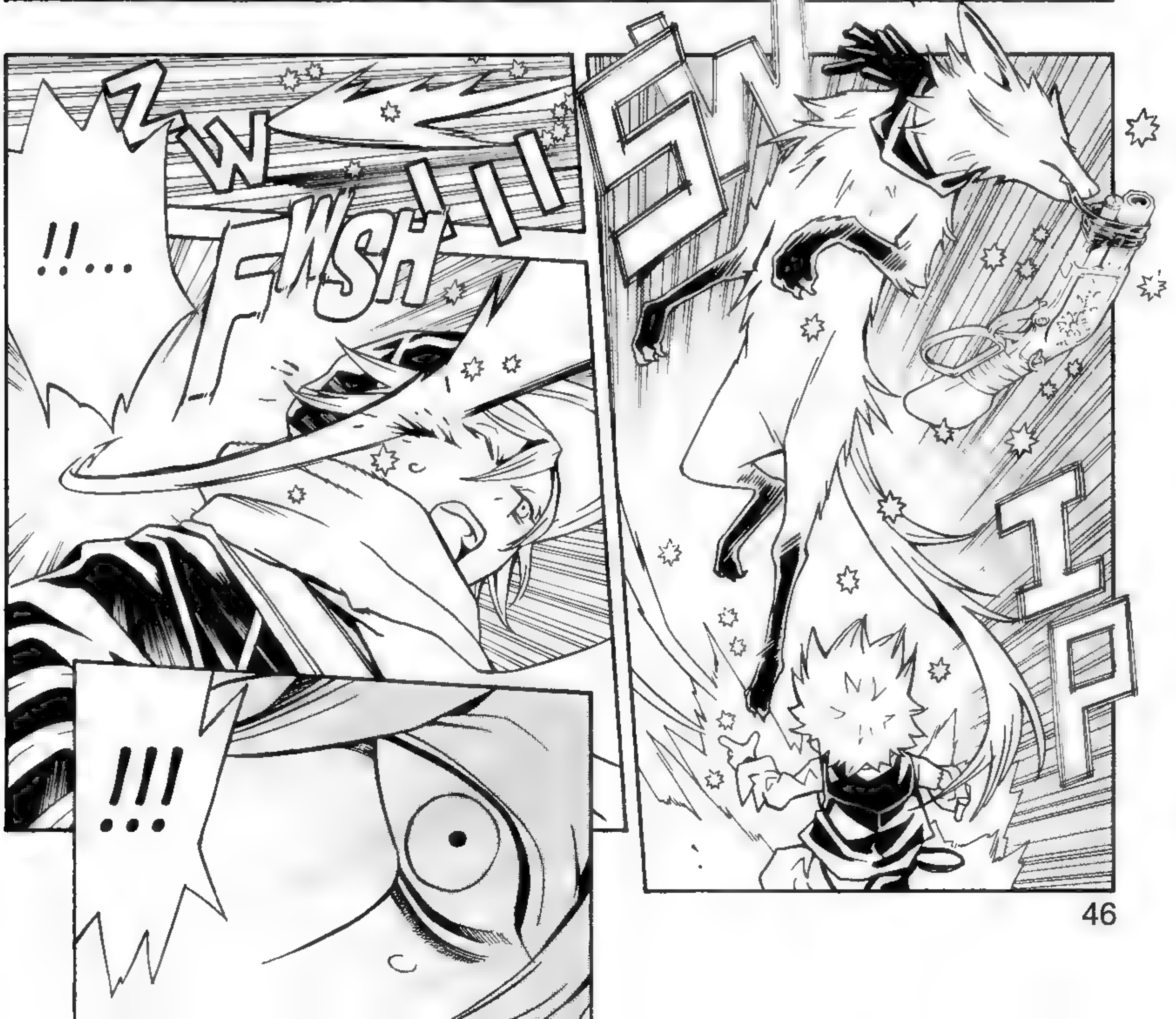
MY BODY WOULD REMAIN ...

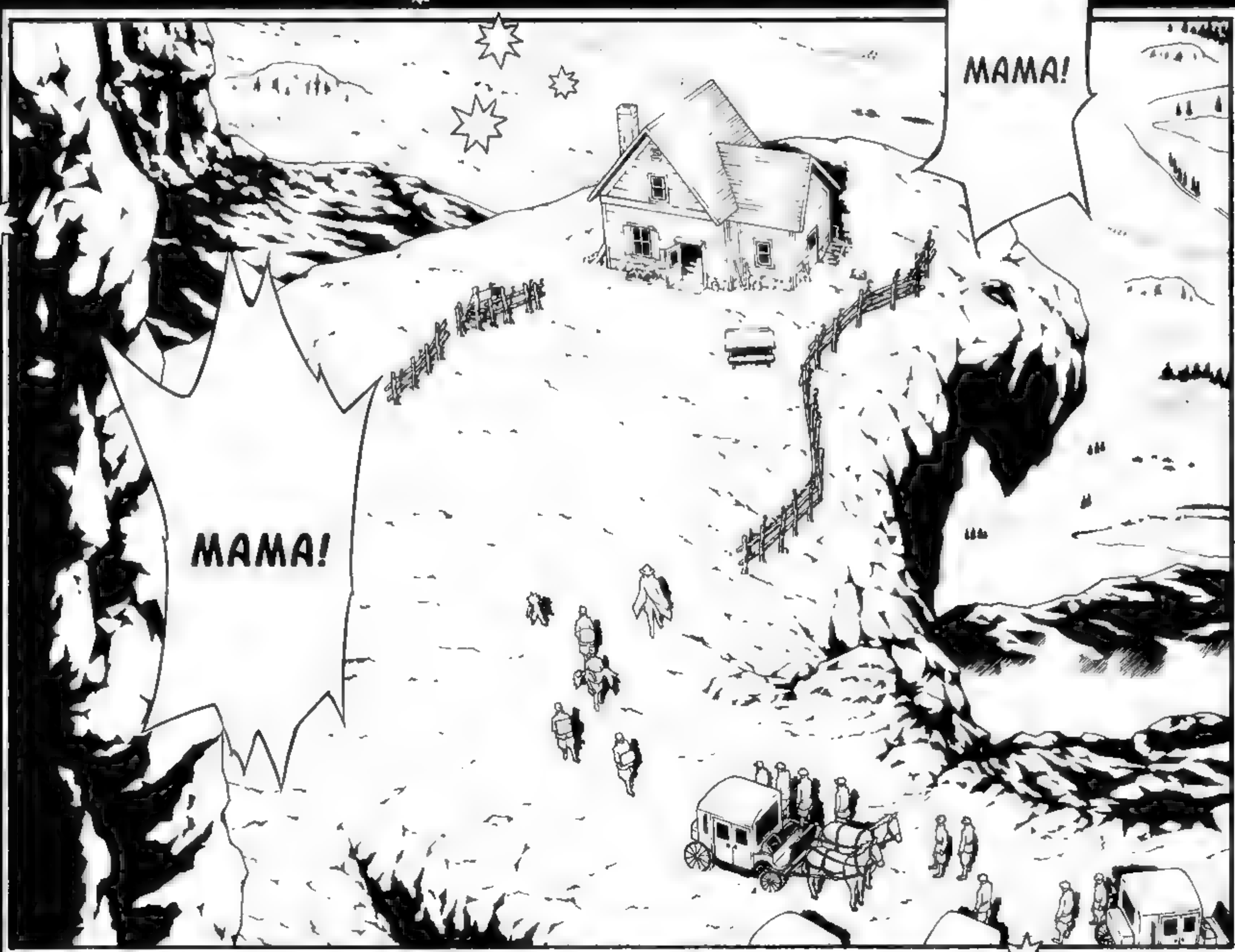
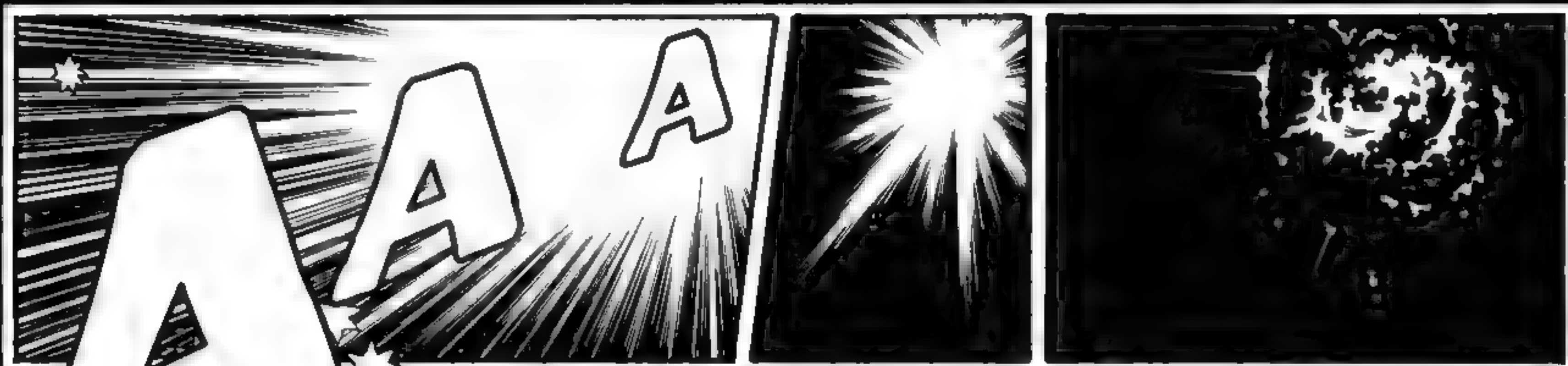












WHERE
AM I?

WHO
ARE
YOU?

WAIT!

THAT'S
MY
MOTHER!

WHAT
ARE
YOU
DOING
WITH
MAMA?

WHERE
ARE YOU
TAKING
HER?

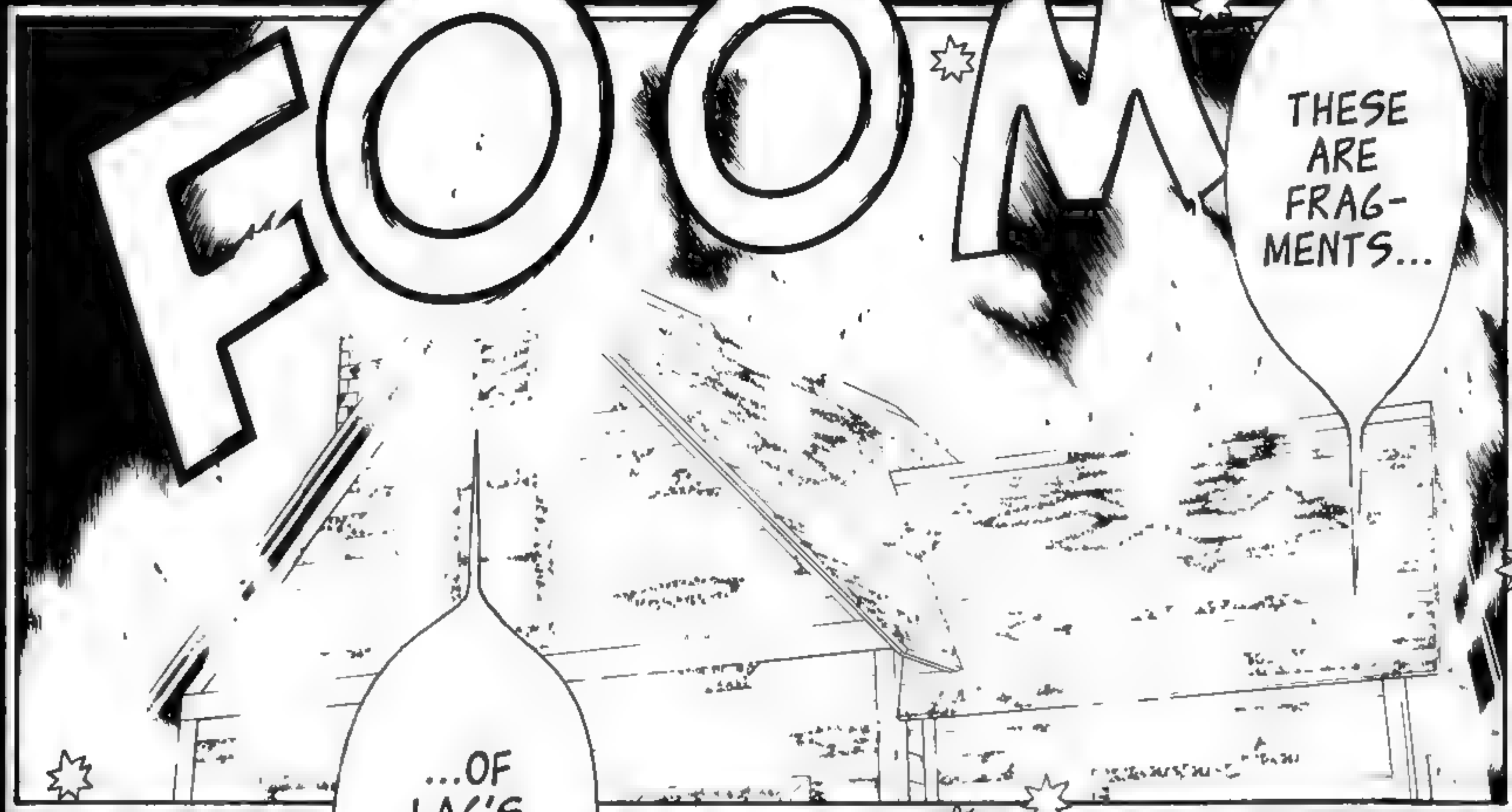
PAT
PAT

AH!

FWOMP

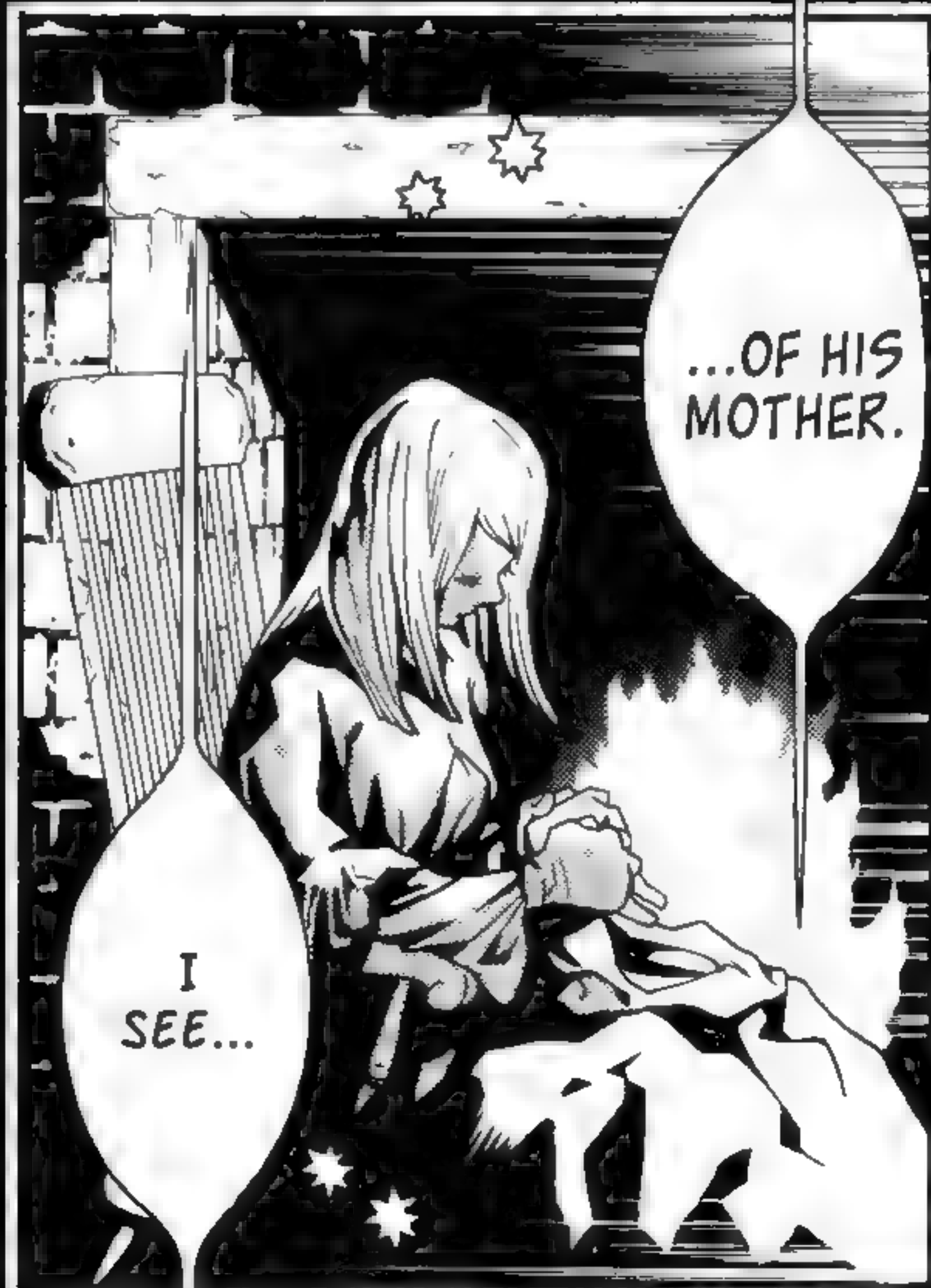
LAG?





THESE
ARE
FRAG-
MENTS...

...OF
LAG'S
HEART.



I
SEE...

...OF HIS
MOTHER.



MAMA
MEM-
ORIES
...



...
RAISED
LAG...
...RAISED
ME ALL BY
HERSELF.

HIS
MOTHER
...
MOM...

HIS
MOTHER
...
MAMA...
LAG AND
ME AND
...

WERE
ALWAYS
TOGETHER
...

GIVE
ME...

LAG'S
...
GIVE
ME...

...ALL BY
HERSELF.

MAMA
!!!

GIVE
HER
BACK!







MAMA...



!!

WOOF!



OH,
NO...

ARE!

RODA
?!

WHAT
IS
IT?!

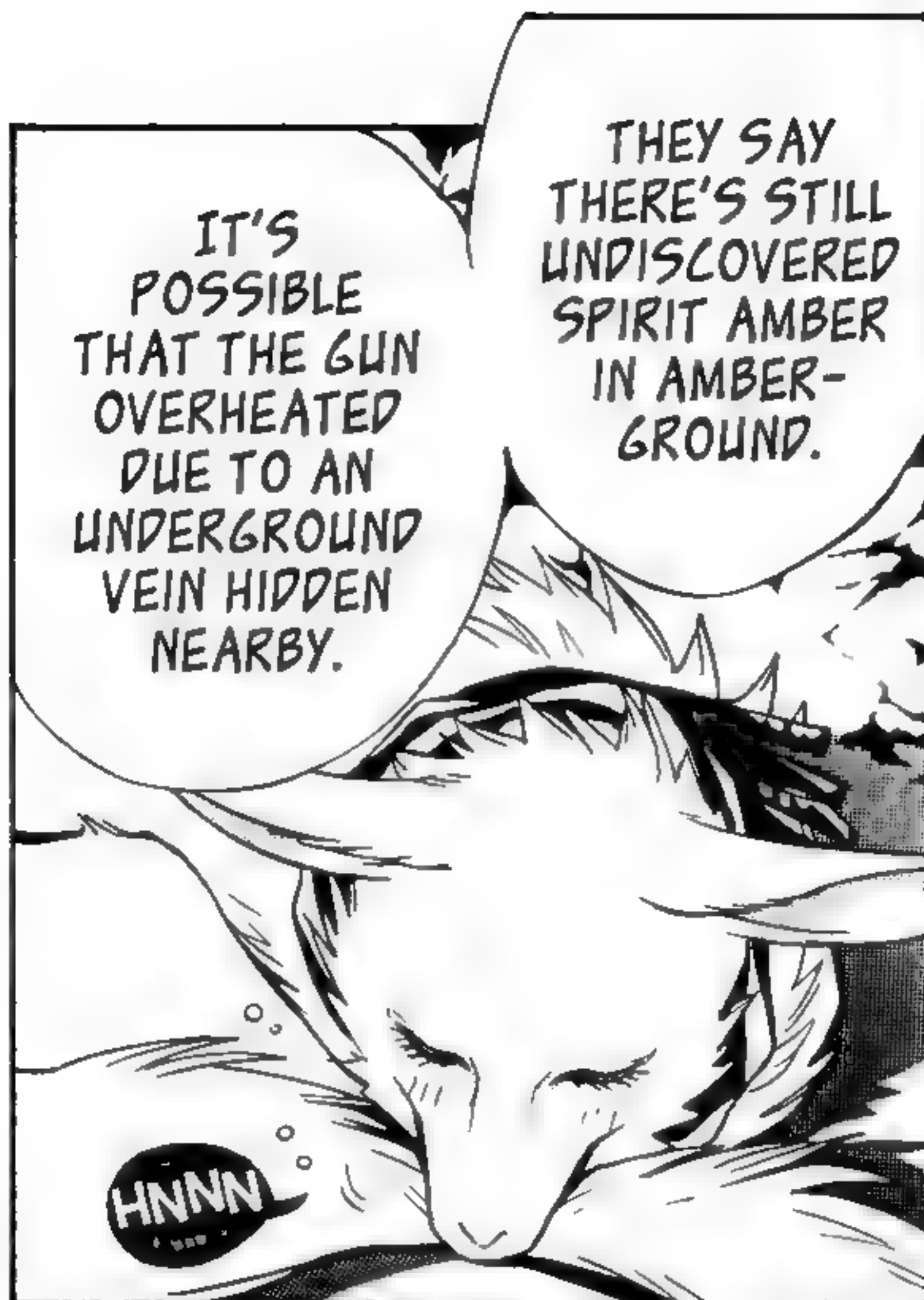
LAG!!





Z
A
A





IT'S POSSIBLE THAT THE GUN OVERHEATED DUE TO AN UNDERGROUND VEIN HIDDEN NEARBY.

THEY SAY THERE'S STILL UNDISCOVERED SPIRIT AMBER IN AMBER-GROUND.



HARD TO SAY EXACTLY.

WHAT HAPPENED?

THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT AMBER IN MY SHINDANJUU JUMPED, AND IT FIRED ON ITS OWN.



..LAG SEEING.

ANYWAY, GET A LITTLE MORE SLEEP...



HUH?

WHAT?!

He's laughing?

...SO I HOPE I DIDN'T DO MORE HARM THAN GOOD.



TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, IT'S NOT MY STRONG POINT...

...IS A BOOSTER SHOT TO HELP YOUR HEART RECOVER.

ONE USE ...

THE SHINDAN HAS MANY USES.

YOU
USED TOO
MUCH
HEART.

GOOD
NIGHT,
LAG
SEEING.

SIGH



THAT'S
WHAT
THAT
FEELING
WAS.

FW
IP...

HIS
MOTHER,
HUH?



Rrruuu

I'M
WORRIED
ABOUT HER.
I WANT
TO SEE
HER
SAFE.

MUST
BE THE
INFLUENCE
OF LAG'S
HEART...





...THERE
ARE BOUND
TO BE
HUNDREDS
OF GAICHUU
HOMING IN
ON US.

AFTER A
FIREWORKS
DISPLAY LIKE
THAT HEART
BURST...

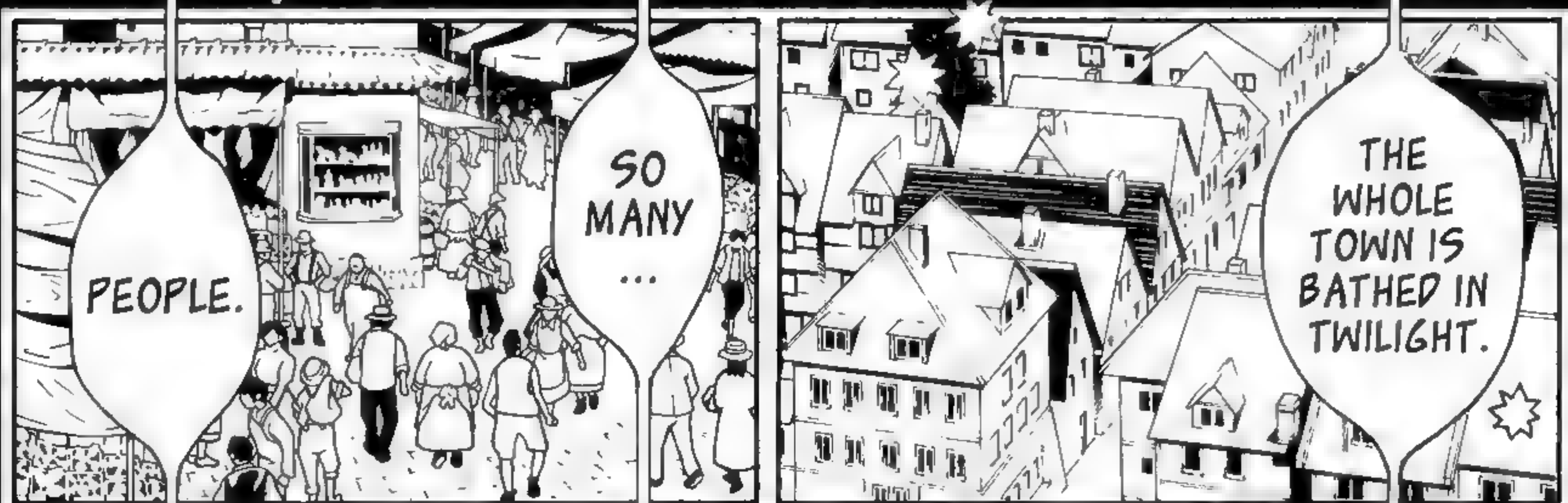
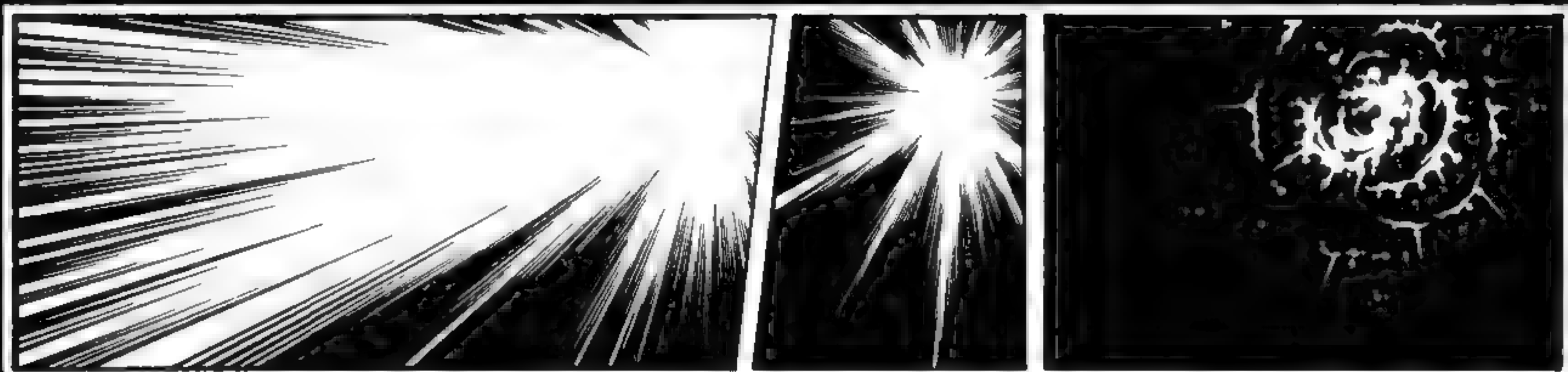


AFTER
ALL...

I'LL
BE
WORKING
OVERTIME
...

...IT'S
PART
OF THE
JOB.

...BUT
THAT
CAN'T
BE
HELPED.

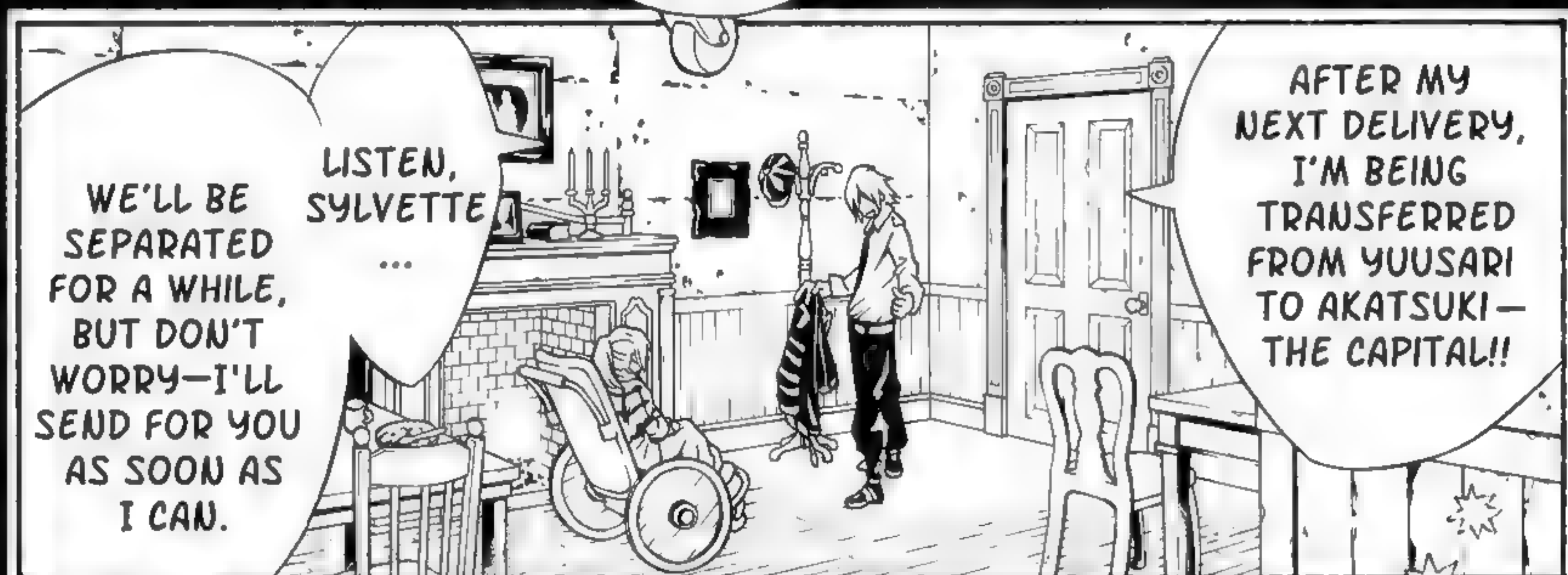


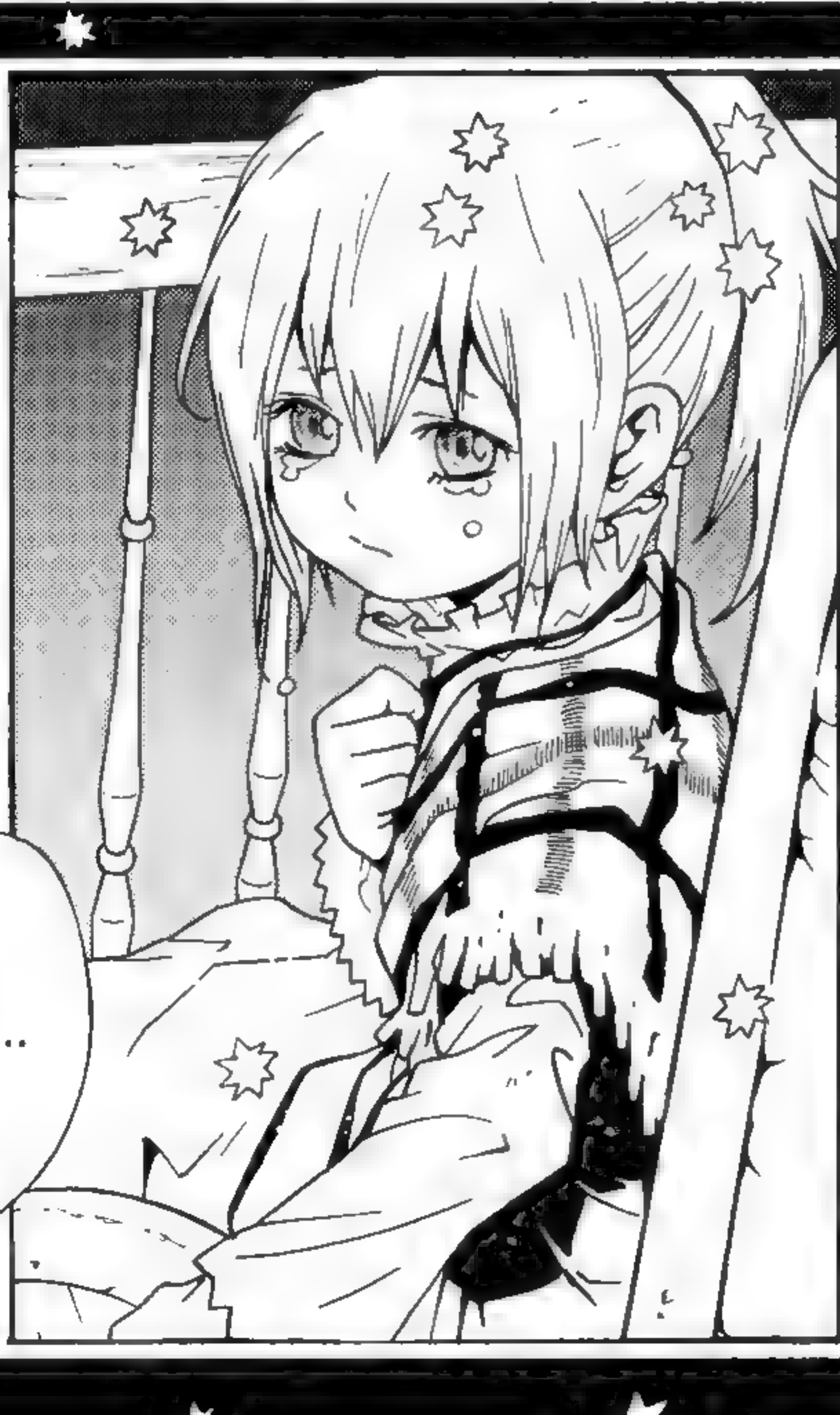
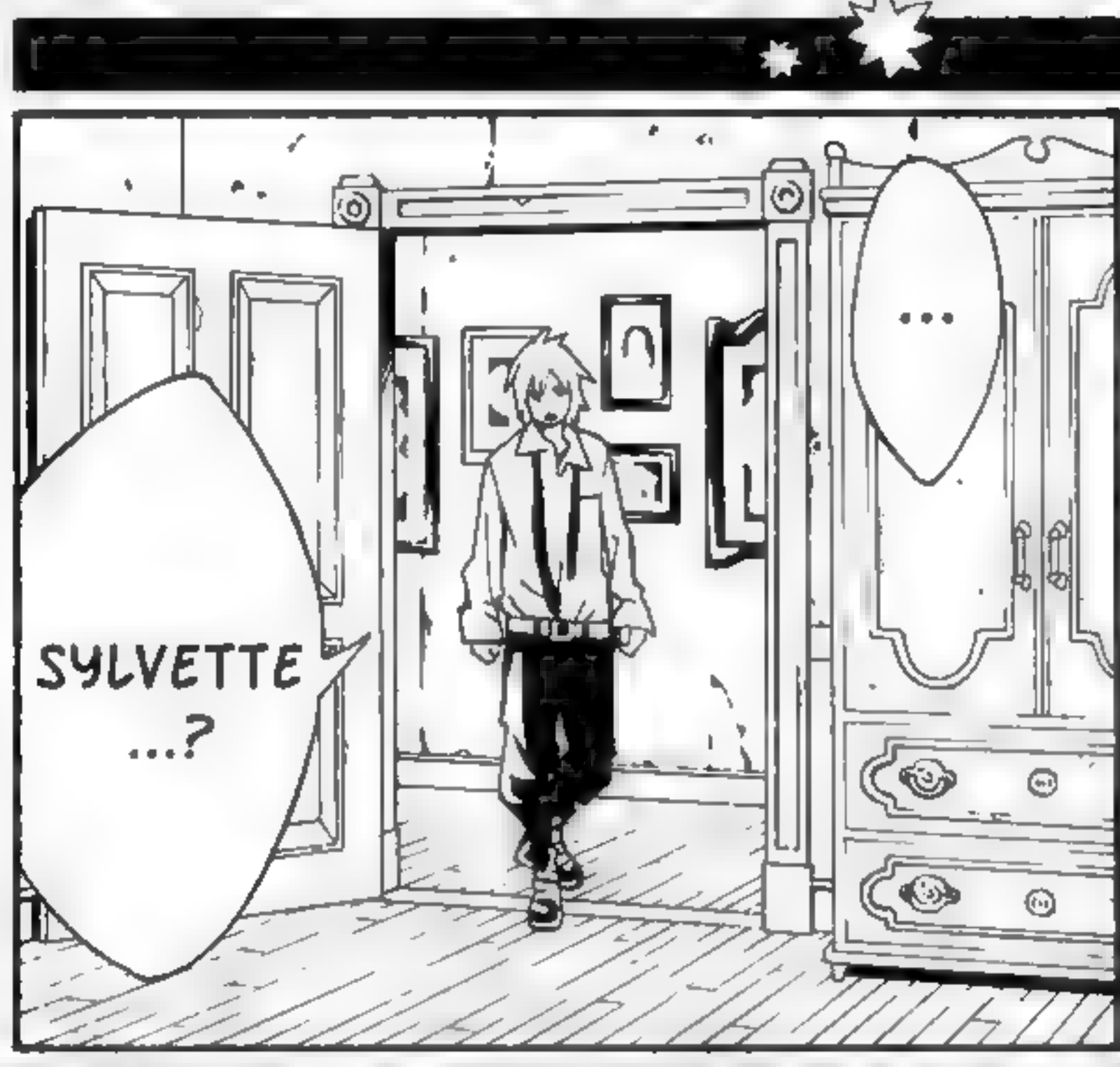
PEOPLE.

SO
MANY
...

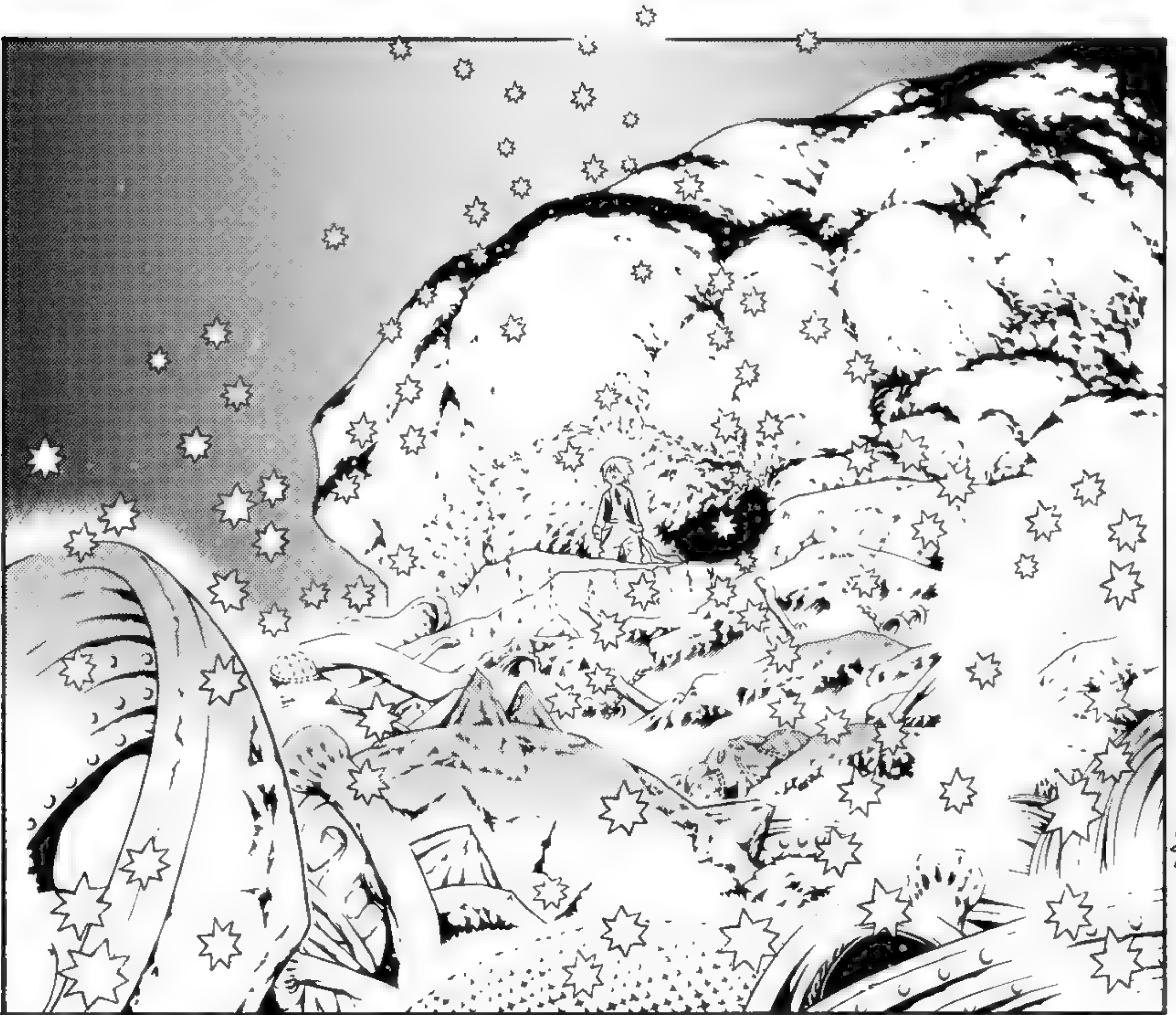
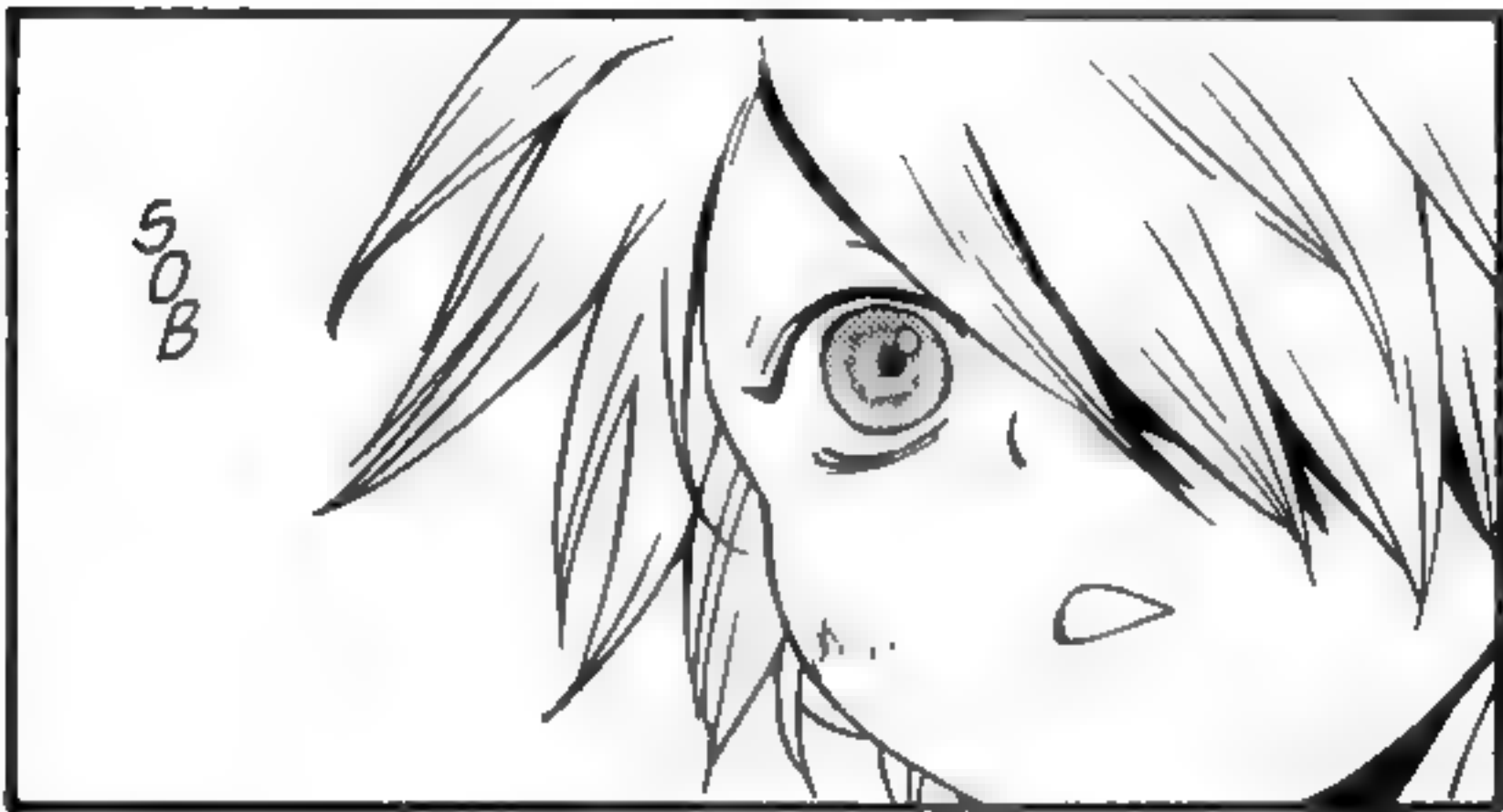
THE
WHOLE
TOWN IS
BATHED IN
TWILIGHT.

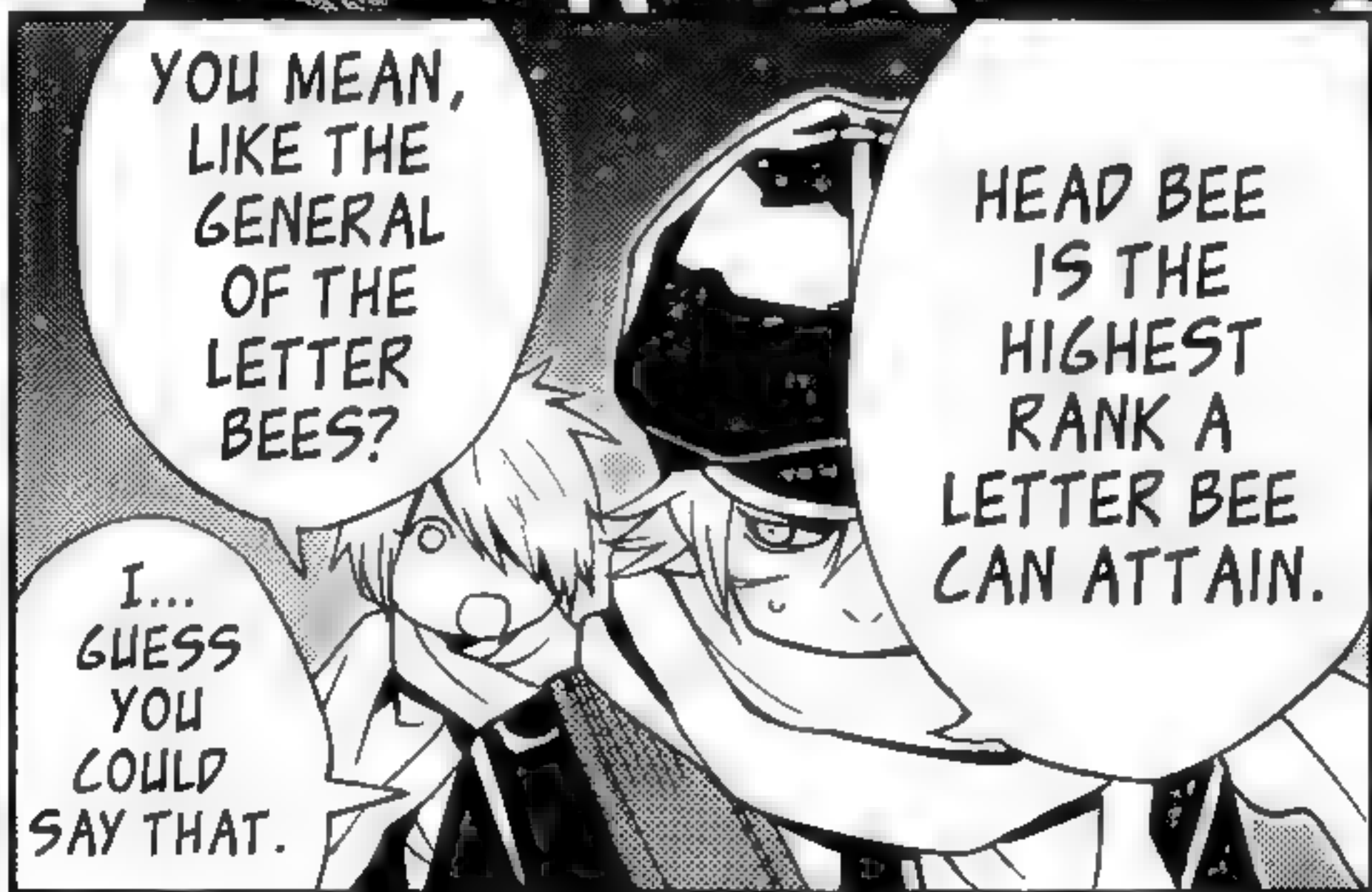


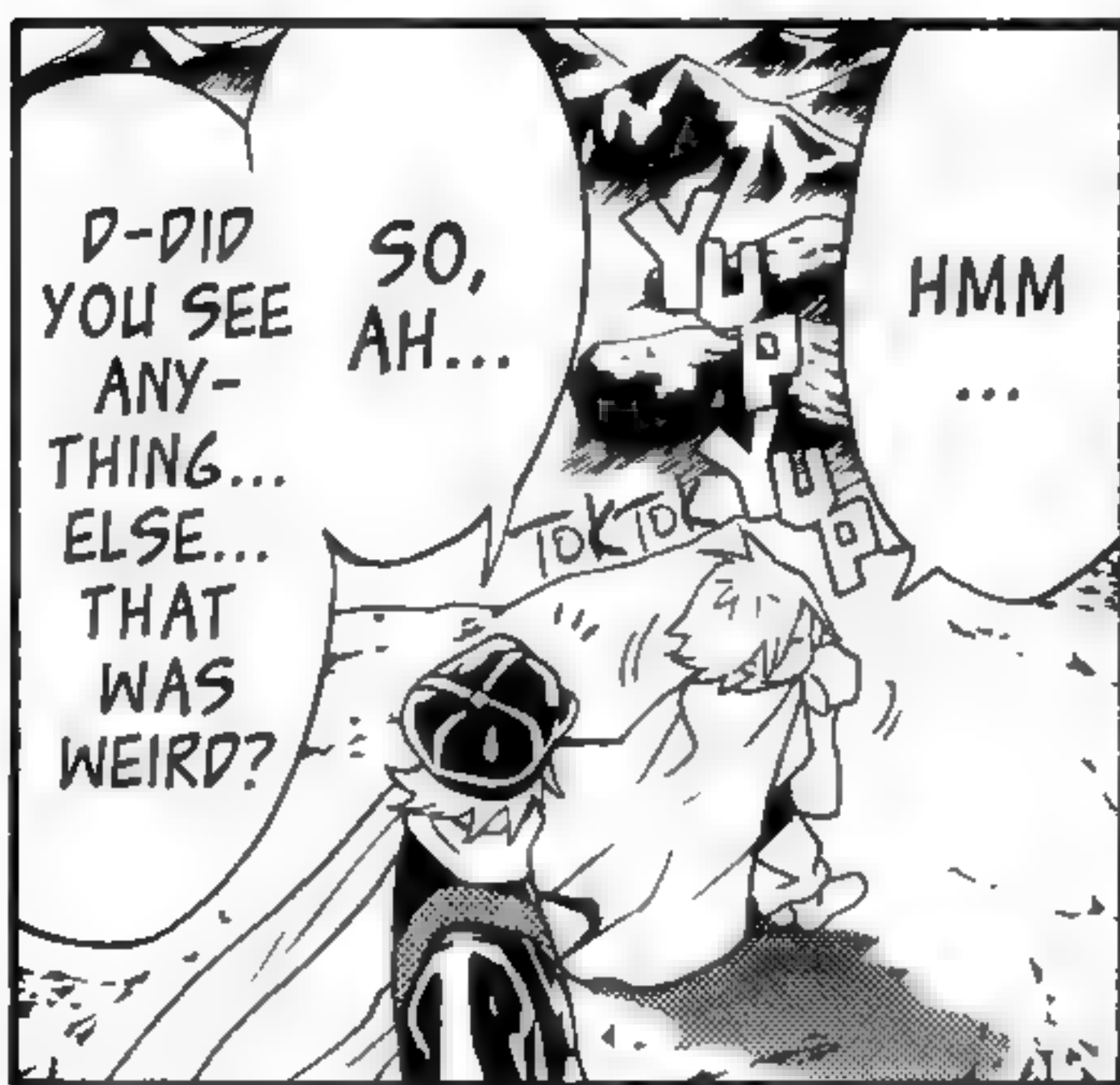












D-DID YOU SEE ANY-THING... ELSE... THAT WAS WEIRD?

SO, AH...

TOK TOK

HMM ...



ASIDE FROM URGENT GOVERNMENT DELIVERIES, HE WORKS IN THE CAPITAL. I'VE NEVER EVEN SEEN HIM.

RIGHT NOW, THERE'S ONLY ONE HEAD BEE.

BUT BECOMING HEAD BEE, THAT'S WHAT ALL THE LETTER BEES ARE SHOOTING FOR.



WHAT IS IT?

WHAT'S WITH THAT LOOK?!



HAVE YOU KISSED HER YET? HAVE YOU?!

YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH ARIA, AREN'T YOU? ARE YOU TWO DATING?

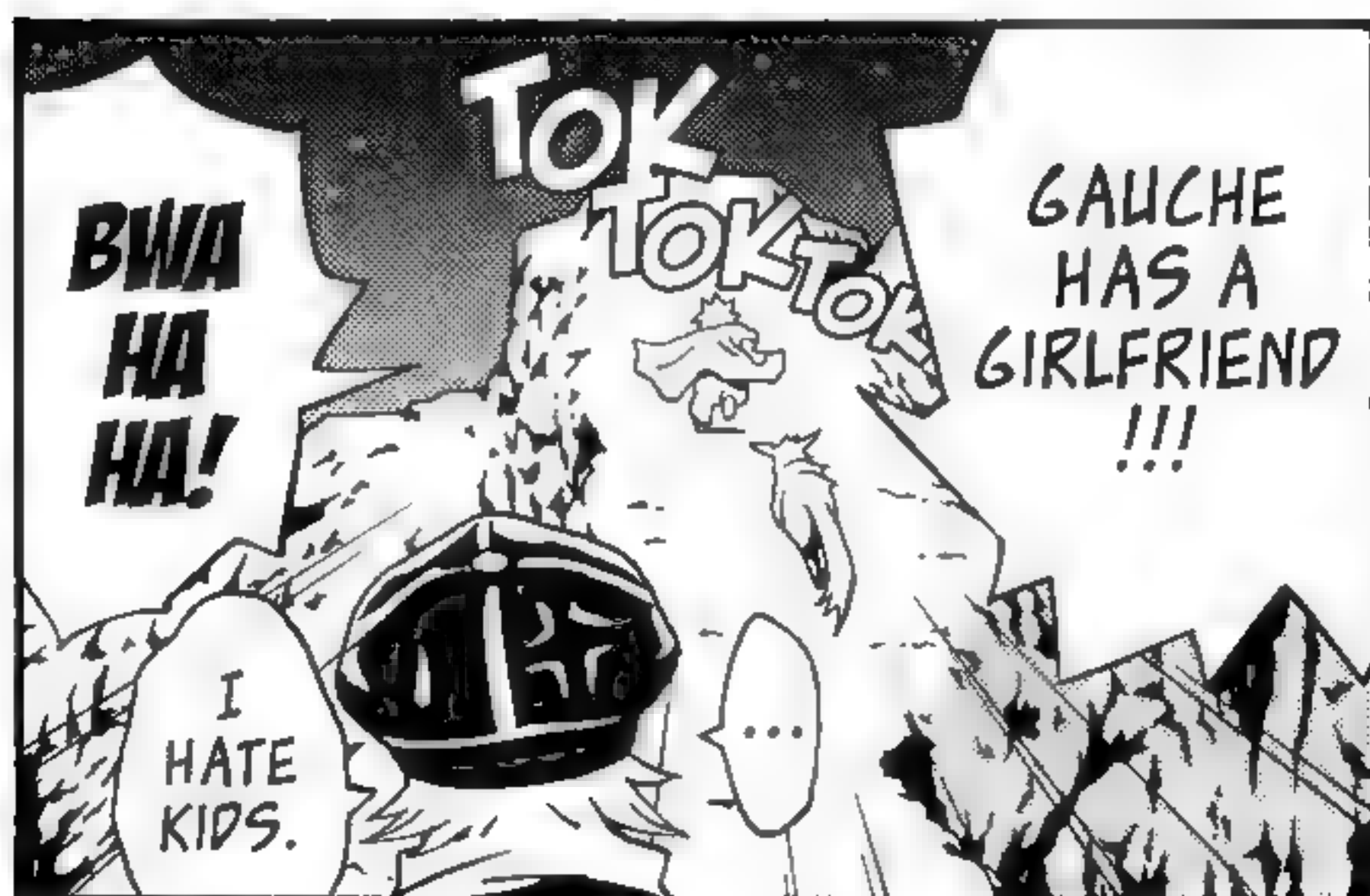


SEVEN... SAME AGE AS YOU, ACTUALLY ...

SYLVETTE'S A CUTIE!! HOW OLD IS SHE?!

HANG ON...

YOU SAW MORE, DIDN'T YOU?!



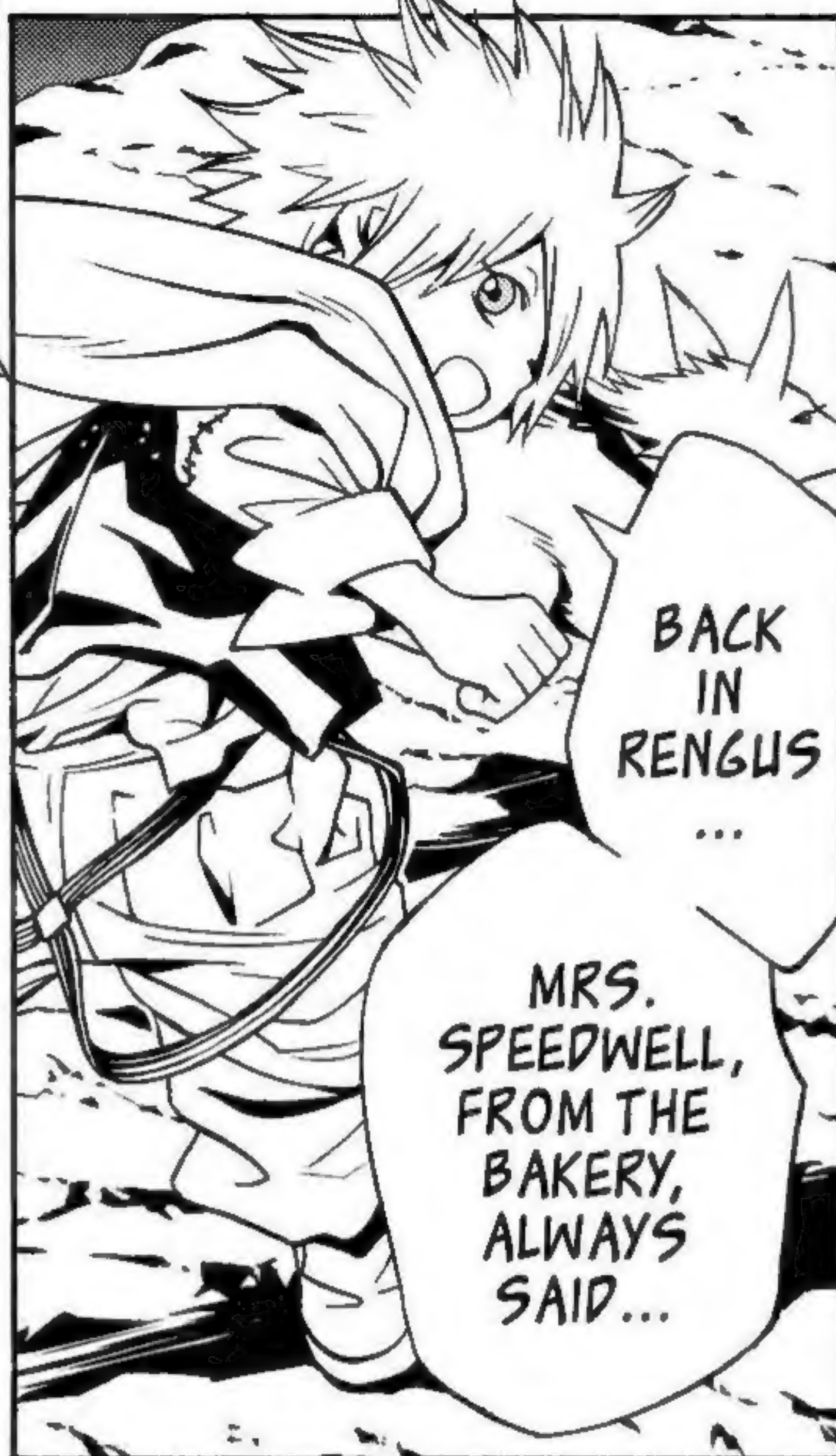
BWA HA HA!

TOK TOK TOK

GAUCHE HAS A GIRLFRIEND !!!

I HATE KIDS.

... "THE MORE
OBNOXIOUS
THEY ARE,
THE MORE
LIKELY THEY
ARE TO
SUCCEED"!



BACK
IN
RENGUS
...

MRS.
SPEEDWELL,
FROM THE
BAKERY,
ALWAYS
SAID...



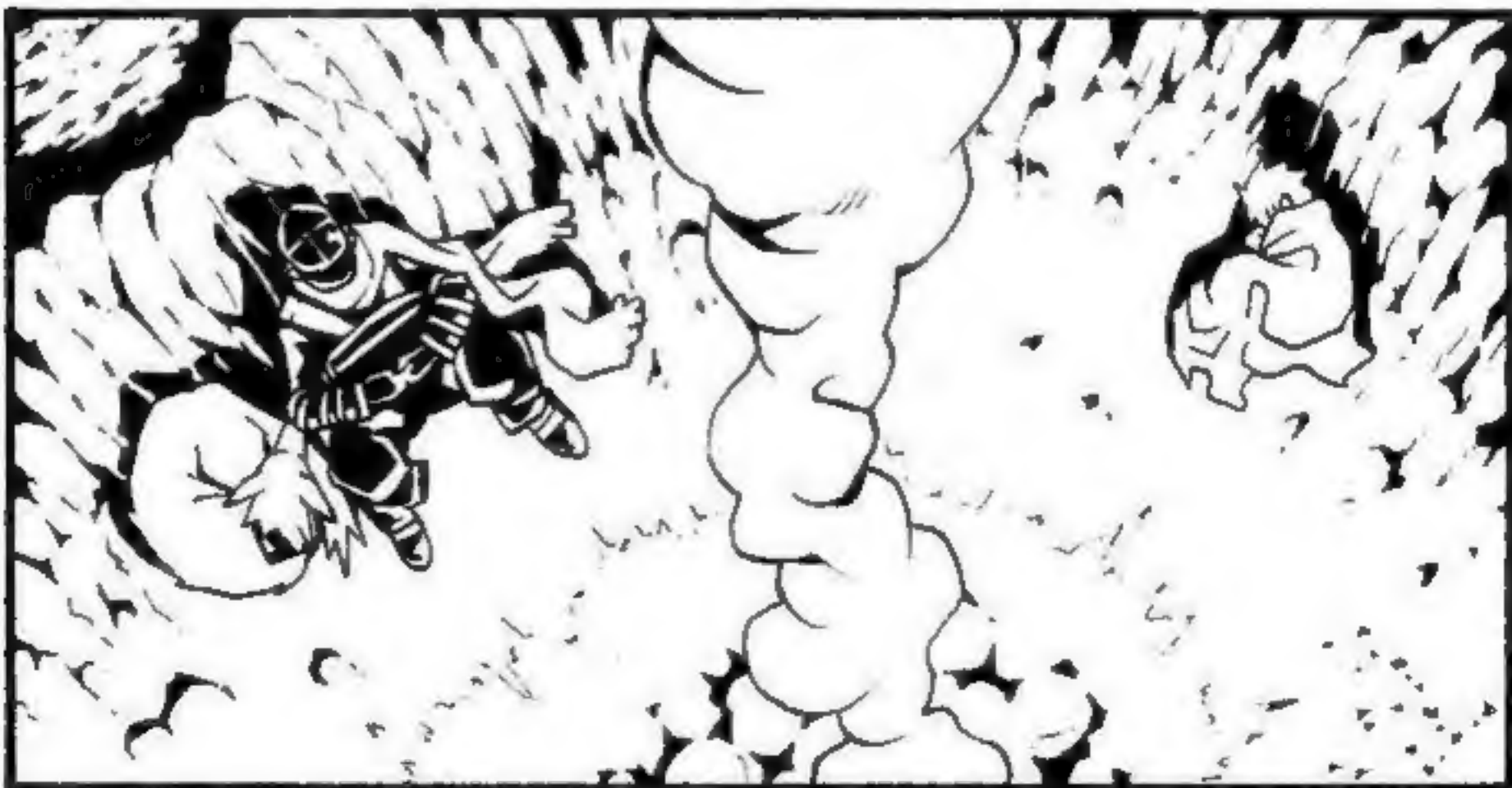
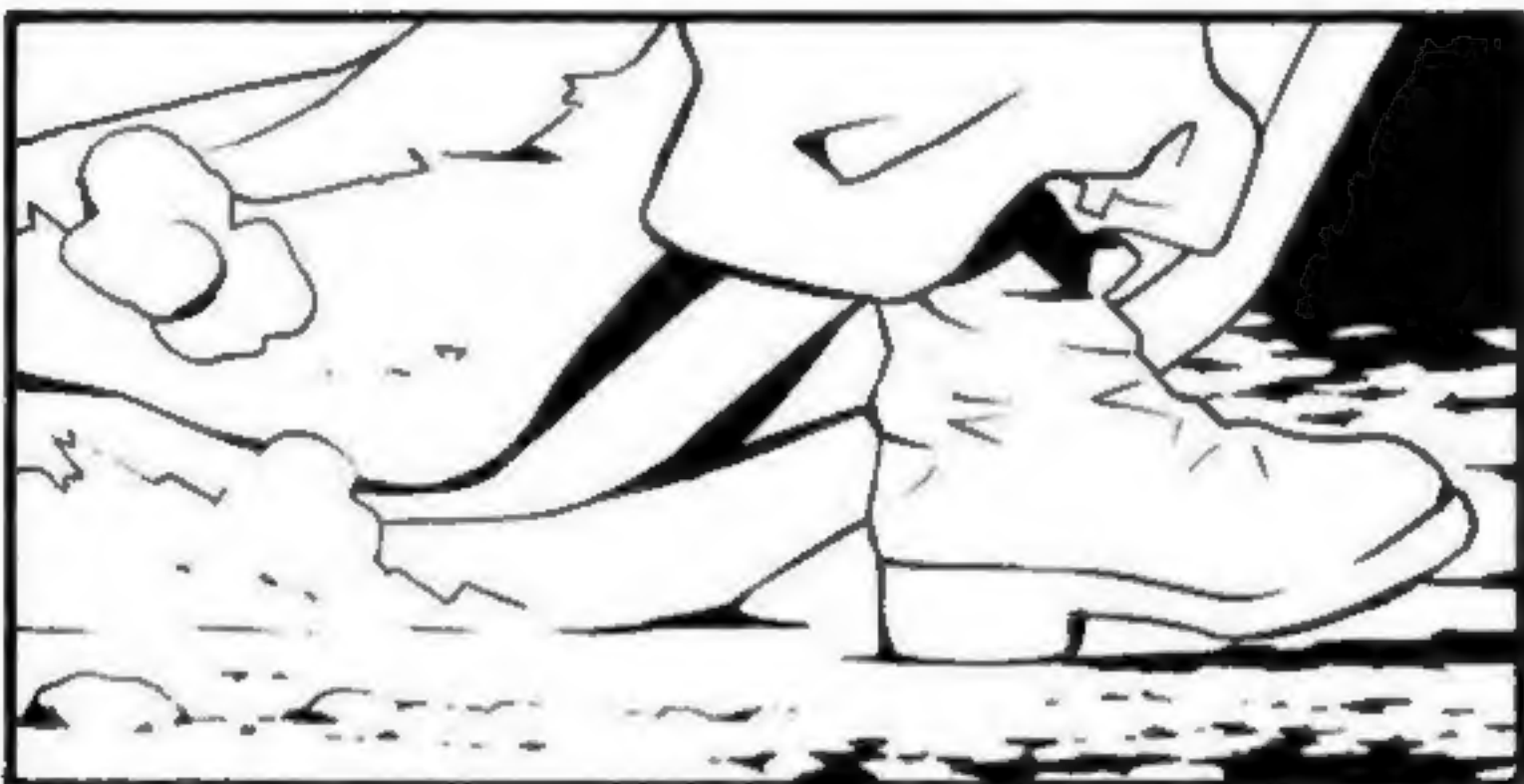
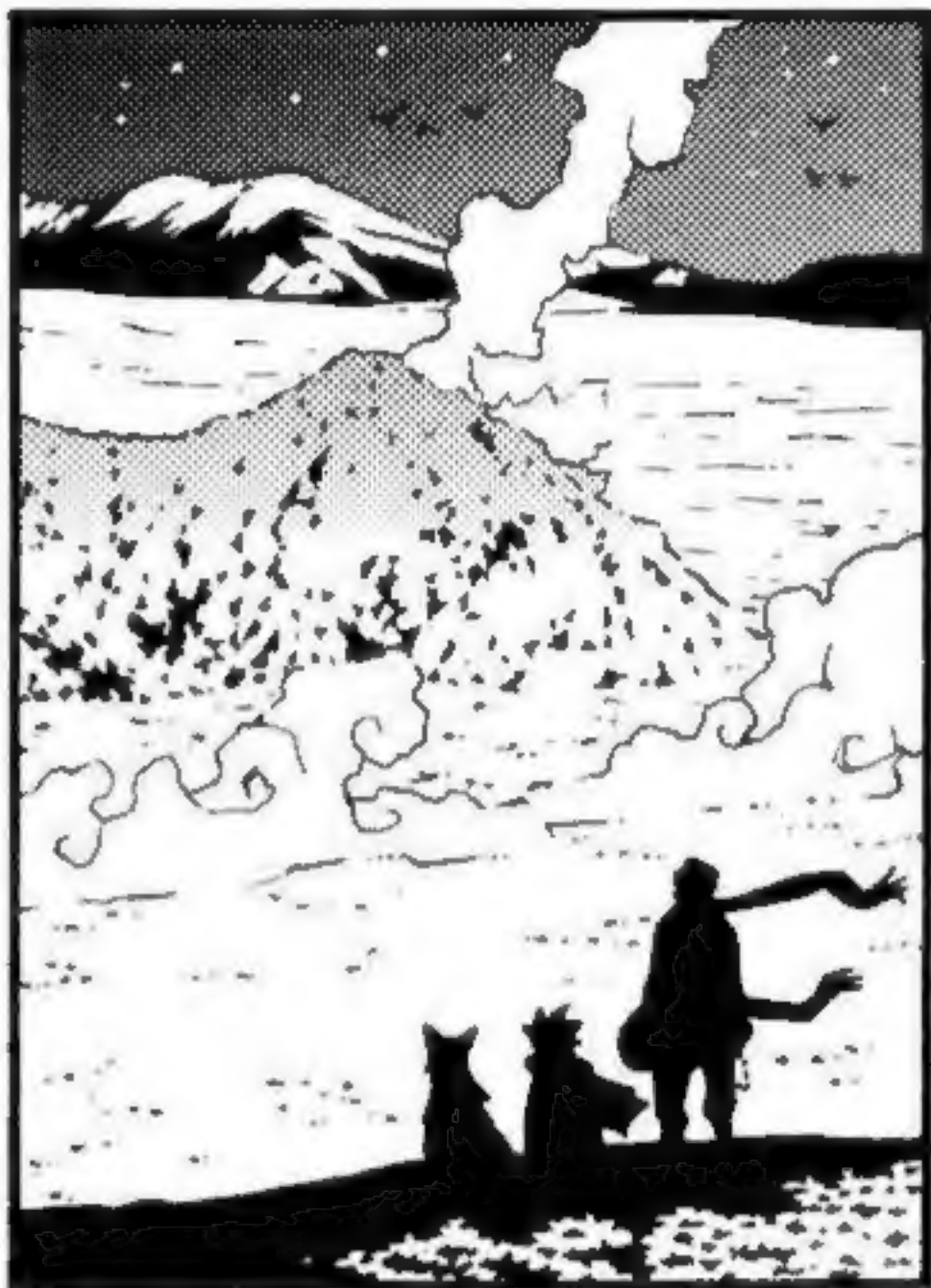
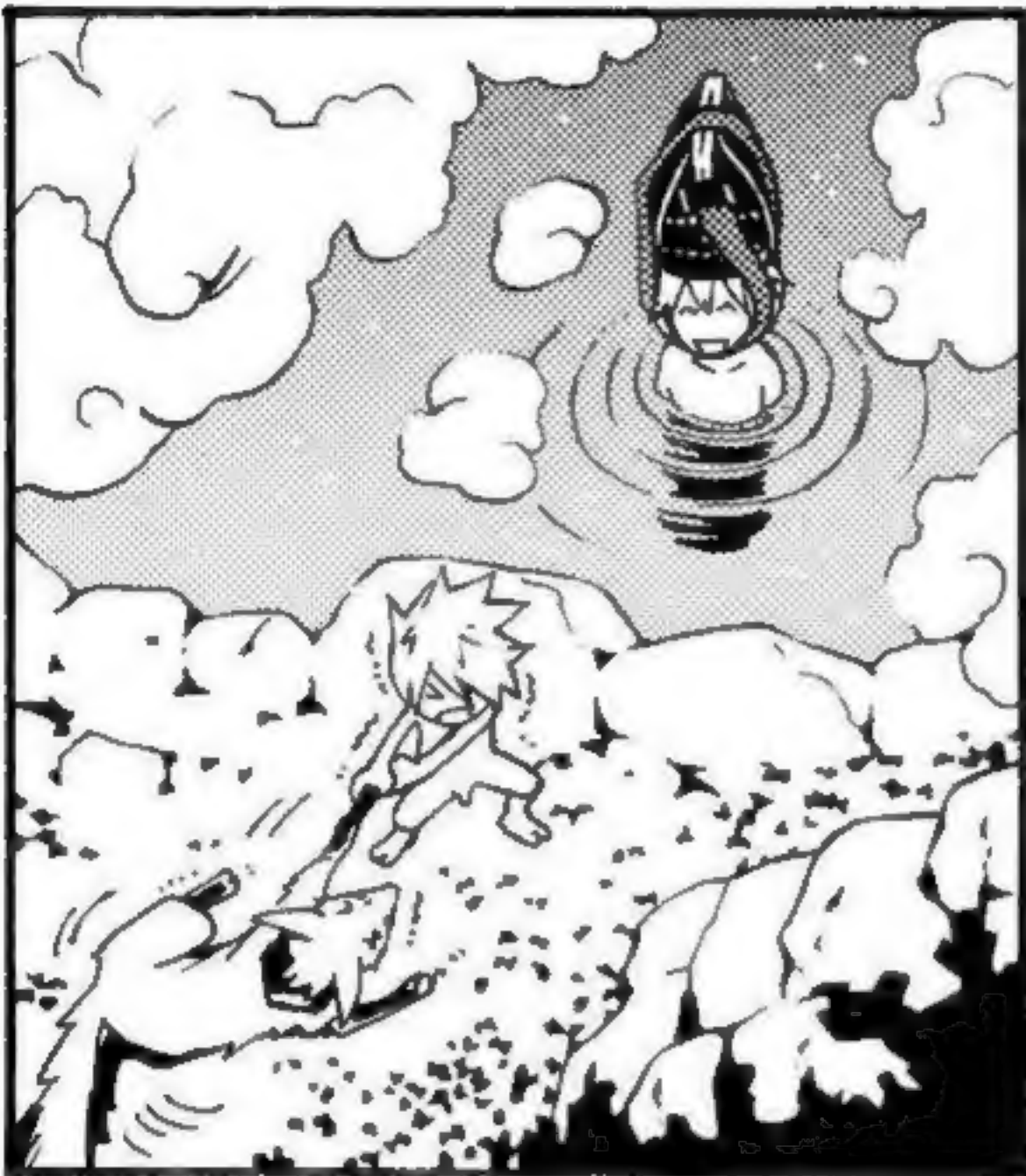
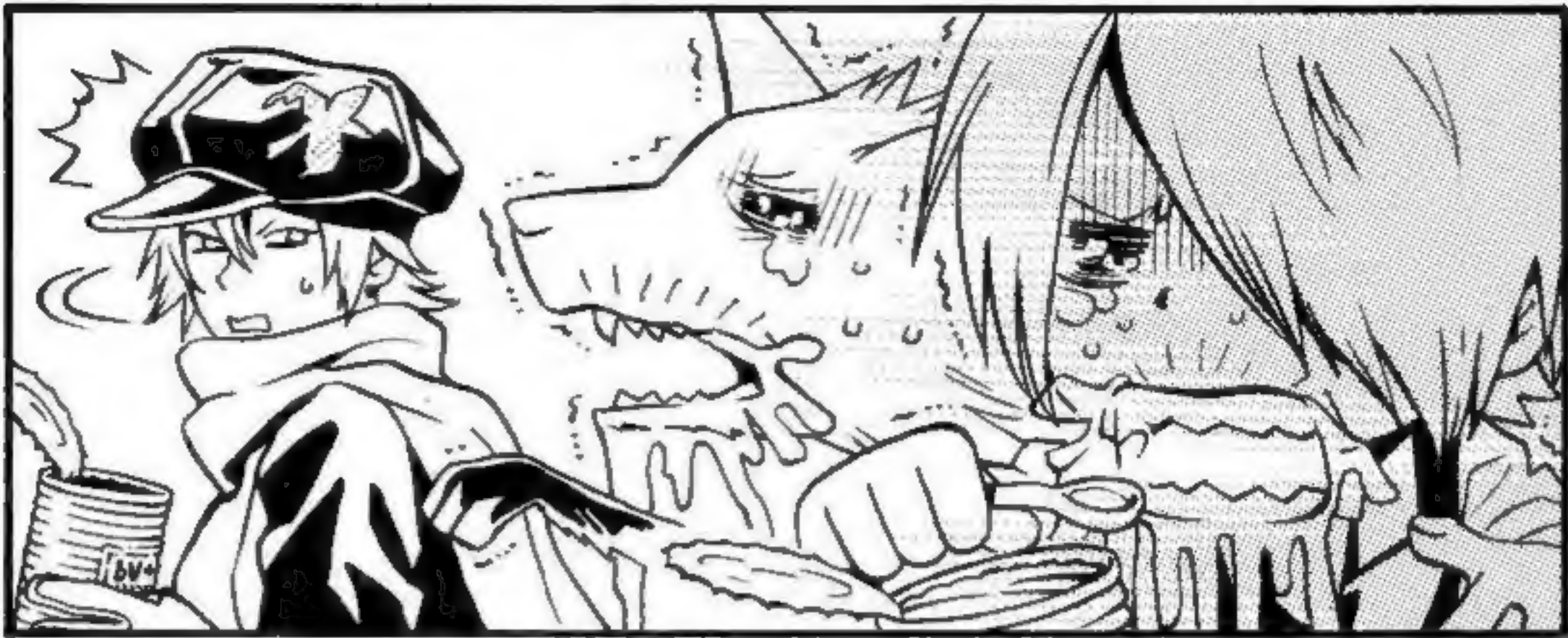
HUH?

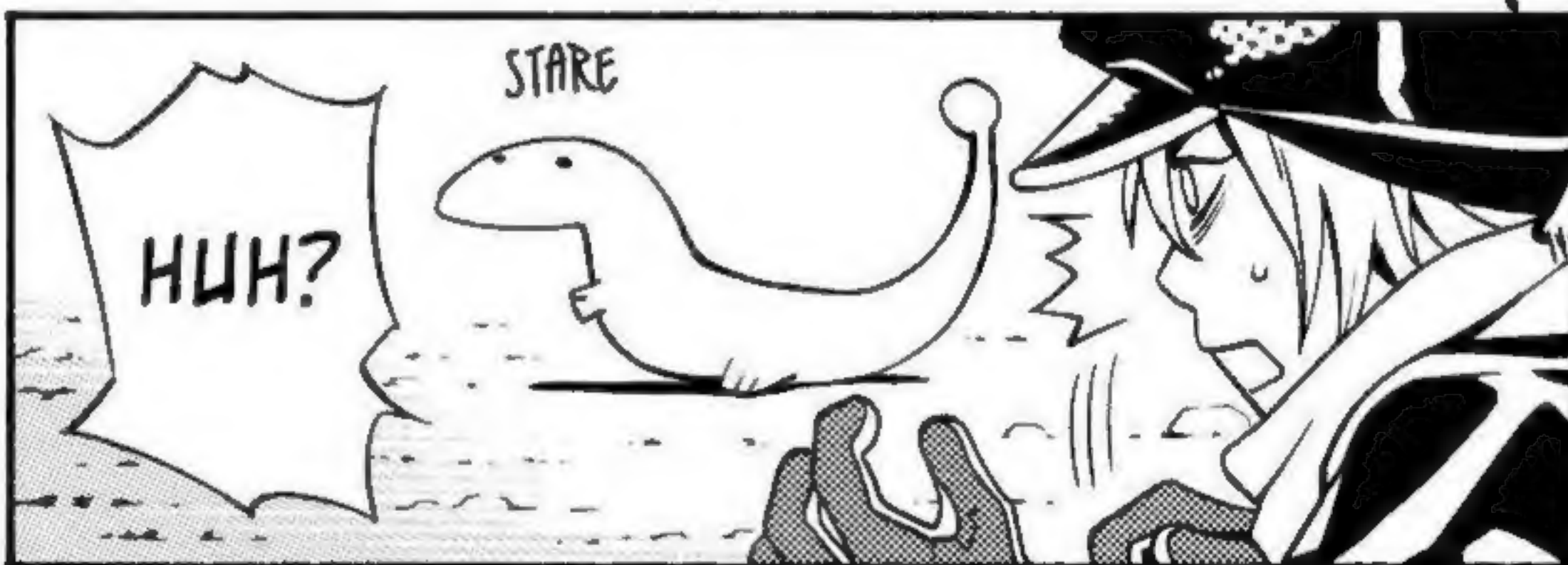
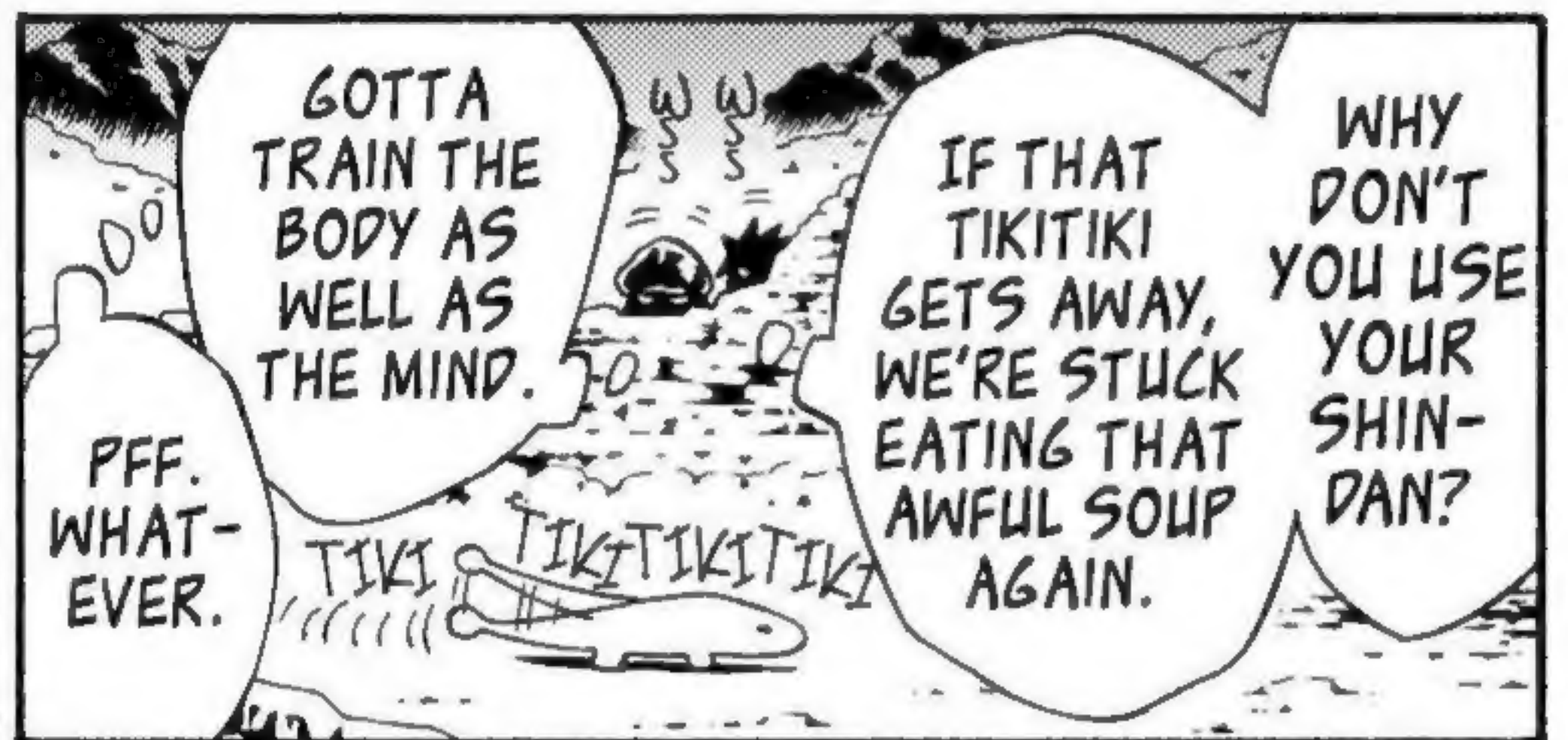
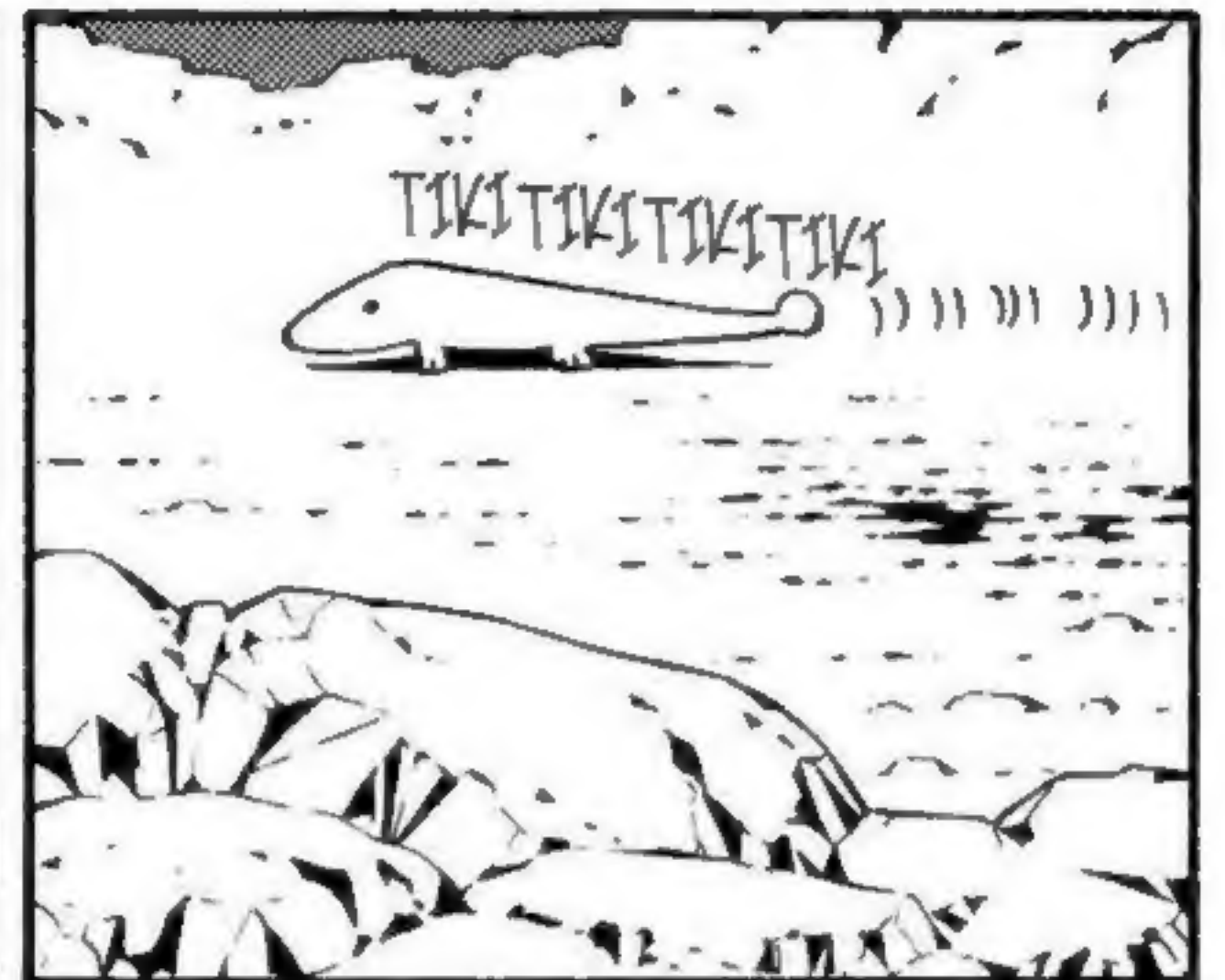
YOU'LL
DO IT,
GAUCHE!

YOU'LL
BECOME
HEAD BEE
SOMEDAY.

...
HUH?







HOW
DO I SEND
A LETTER
TO HER?

WHAT
ABOUT
MAMA?

LAG...

WHAT'S
THE BIG
DEAL ABOUT
LETTERS?

ANYWAY
...

I
WANT TO
GO WITH
YOU TO
AKATSUKI!

TAKE
ME WITH
YOU!

I'LL
NEVER
SEE
MAMA
AGAIN!

I'LL
NEVER
SEE
HER...

IF YOU
DELIVER ME
TO CAMBEL
LITUS...

PLEASE,
GAUCHE
!

YOU'RE
GOING TO
AKATSUKI
AFTER THIS,
AREN'T YOU,
GAUCHE?

!

FIN